THE POETRY
~ OF ~
FATHER TABB

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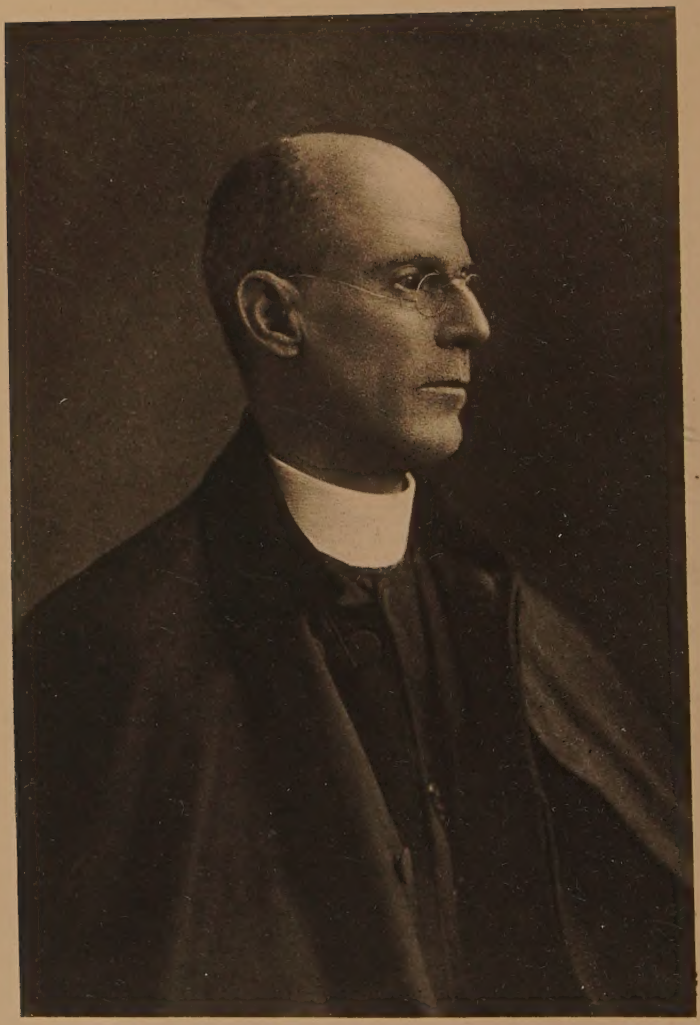

John B. Tabb

THE POETRY OF FATHER TABB

JOHN BANISTER TABB

Edited by

FRANCIS A. LITZ, PH.D.

Instructor in English, Teachers College, Johns Hopkins University and Baltimore City College

"In small proportions we just beauty see;
And in short measures life may perfect be."
— BEN JONSON

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PREFACE

The following pages contain all the poems of Father Tabb published during his life and since his death except *The Rosary in Rhyme* and *Quips and Quiddits*, as well as a few here printed for the first time. All but the latter and those from the *Browne-Tabb Album*, the *Connor, Donohoe*, and *Connolly Manuscripts* had his approval. Although these manuscript poems, which I discovered in the possession of his friends and published for the first time five years ago in my book, *Father Tabb: A Study of His Life and Works* (The Johns Hopkins Press), do not represent his highest achievement, nevertheless they are too valuable to the admirer of his poetry and to the student of literature to be ignored or forgotten.

The poems that are here brought together appeared originally in the following volumes:

Poems, 1882
An Octave to Mary, 1893
Poems, 1894
Lyrics, 1897
Child Verse, 1899
Later Lyrics, 1902
A Selection from the Verses of John B. Tabb, 1906
Later Poems, 1910
Father Tabb, 1923

The poems are grouped according to subject-matter and form, the plan that was evidently followed in arranging the contents of the separate volumes. The earliest date associated with the poems, either of composition or of publication, is also given.

Acknowledgment for the use of individual poems and collections is due the following persons:

Miss Lucy H. Browne, for the *Browne-Tabb Album*

Reverend Daniel J. Connor, for the *Connor Manuscript*

Monsignor James A. Cunnane, for the *Donohoe Manuscript*

Monsignor Arthur T. Connolly, for the *Connolly Manuscript.*

Francis A. Litz

June 1, 1928

INTRODUCTION

If Poe was wrong in maintaining that a long poem does not exist, that it is simply a flat contradiction in terms, and that such a great work as *Paradise Lost* is to be considered as poetical only when it is viewed as a series of minor poems, he should, nevertheless, be pardoned for misleading one disciple. The essay on *The Poetical Principle* convinced Father Tabb that the "ultimate, perhaps, if we except the dramatic, the only authentic art form is the lyric." The acceptance of this doctrine saved him from further unsuccessful experimentation with long poems and emphasized his ability in handling the shorter forms. Such a conviction finds poetic expression in this lyric, first called *Ambition*—

> O little bird, I'd be
> A Poet like to thee,
> Singing my native song—
> Brief to the ear, but long
> To Love and Memory.

Brief to the ear! What a fitting phrase for this poetry! Brevity, the most obvious characteristic of his work, sets him apart among poets of acknowledged excellence and undying fame. His ability to say much in little, to suggest profound thought by a single word,

has been recognized by all critics. His brevity stands in strong contrast with the diffuse style of most of his contemporaries, particularly of the South. Vain is the search for verbiage in Tabb after 1882. Possessed of one idea or emotion, he sought to rid it of all irrelevant details, to reduce it to its simplest elements, and to record it in as few words consistent with clearness as he could.

The ability to express thoughts and emotions clearly was also his, although this clarity is like Browning's rather than Longfellow's. "Tabb," said Professor Killis Campbell, "is not easy reading; he is a poet, like Browning—or most real poets for that matter—who needs to be pondered over." No one will deny that in the longer, which are also the earlier, poems clearness is lacking; the best illustration of this is *The Rhyme of the Rock*. Only a few of the shorter pieces are obscure, and in almost every instance the obscurity is due to the fact that the occasion or experience that inspired the poem is now unknown or has been forgotten. In other cases a little reflection will usually clarify what may at first seem vague or remote. His style is certainly clearer than that of Emily Dickinson and of Lizette Woodworth Reese, contemporaries with whom one naturally compares him. At his best he is as clear as Robert Herrick.

In many other respects also Father Tabb resembles this seventeenth-century Anglican poet, particularly in perfection of delicate workmanship and variety of interests. Tabb at his best is a supreme artist. It is pre-

cisely by and through his superb art that he has achieved and secured an immortal place in American literature. Father Tabb, it may safely be predicted, will live in the memory of men as long as Herrick. When the world ceases to enjoy the sort of poetry these two singers have left it, then and only then shall both be forgotten.

So finished, so inevitable, is his song that improvement is rarely possible. Singular triumph of his art, indeed, his ability to capture a profound thought or a powerful emotion and imprison it within the narrow confines of a single or double quatrain. No better evidence of this extraordinary power can be offered than *Evolution.* This epigram is a masterly summary of the science and philosophy of the nineteenth century, interpreted, however, in the last two verses, by analogy, in the light of Christian belief. "What could be more delicate in its way than the little *Fern Song,*" asks the reviewer of *Poems* in the London *Spectator,* "and yet what more single in its effect? It is perfect because the whole effect is meant to be and is as delicate and fragile as its shading." In addition to perfection of form Father Tabb's poetry offers extraordinary variety. He took the whole world as his province. His range, to quote Professor Basil L. Gildersleeve, is from Rabelais to Dante. Nor is his originality less remarkable.

John Banister Tabb was born at "The Forest," the family estate at Mattoax, in Amelia County, near Richmond, Virginia, March 22, 1845. His father, Thomas Yelverton Tabb, was a direct descendant of

Humphrey Tabb, an Englishman, who came to Elizabeth County, Virginia, as early as 1637. His mother, Marianna Bertrand Archer, was the daughter of Doctor John R. Archer, of Scotch descent, and a cousin to his father. Of the four children born of this marriage John was the third.

On account of weak eyes John was educated at home first by his mother and later by a tutor, Mr. John Lambert Hood, an Episcopalian colporter from Philadelphia. His musical education was first directed by Mrs. Judith C. Blair, whom he used to call "Aunt Judith."

When the Civil War divided the nation into two hostile camps, John was eager to follow the flag of the Southland. His eyes, however, were a serious obstacle. Finally, through the efforts of Major Ficklin, a friend of the family, he became a blockade-runner and served in this capacity until June 4, 1864, when he was captured off Beaufort, N. C., by the federal ship *Keystone State*. As a prisoner of war he spent the next seven months at Bull Pen, Point Lookout, Maryland, where he met Sidney Lanier. The two became fast friends. A number of poems expressing Tabb's love for the musician-poet are found in this collection.

After the war young Tabb came to Baltimore to prepare himself for a musical career. When money was no longer available for this purpose, he secured a position as teacher in St. Paul's School for boys. Although he used to attend St. Paul's Episcopal Church, he became the intimate friend of Rev. Alfred Curtis,

rector of Mt. Calvary. Disturbed by the religious doubts engendered by Cardinal Newman and shared by Mr. Curtis, he began to reflect seriously upon his own beliefs and the nature of their foundation. After several years of spiritual conflict he was received into the Catholic Church by Bishop Gibbons, September 8, 1872. Two months later he entered St. Charles College, then near Ellicott City, Maryland, to study for the priesthood, and in June, 1875, was graduated. From that time until about the beginning of 1878 he taught in St. Peter's Boys' School, in Richmond. Then he returned to St. Charles to become an instructor in English and Greek and to read philosophy. In September, 1881, he was enrolled as a student of theology in St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, where he remained until he was ordained priest in the Baltimore Cathedral, December 20, 1884. The rest of his life he spent as a member of the faculty at St. Charles.

What a master teacher he was! If there was anything as natural to him as writing poetry, it was certainly his ability to teach. Along with his unusual power of imparting knowledge went the rare ability to penetrate the developing mind of the student, to direct its development, and to mould its tastes. Many a graduate of St. Charles owes his love for literature and his taste for the higher things in life to the year or two he spent in the poet's classes. Father Tabb felt keenly the beauty and power of those masterpieces of literature which appealed to him and found an echo in his own soul, and never tired of interpreting

them as he understood and felt them, so that others might come to the same high appreciation of the gods, as he called the master bards, that he held to be the greatest of human joys.

Humor was also a potent element in his teaching. His ready and inexhaustible wit sparkled in his comments and questions, explanations of grammar and literature, and sentences given as exercises. His only prose work of importance, *Bone Rules,* or *Skeleton of English Grammar,* dedicated to his "pupils, active and passive, perfect and imperfect, past, present, and future," contains a golden treasury of his offerings to the Muse of Bad Grammar. His humor was usually spontaneous, although at times far-fetched or learned, both in the classroom and outside and in the verses that are here reprinted as well as in those which are too personal to appear in print.

The unique method that characterized his teaching reflected his personality, for he himself was unique. One might go the whole round of creation but he would never find another Tabb. He was a blend of opposites. To some he seemed vain, unreasonable, vindictive, hypercritical; to others, humble, considerate, generous, sympathetic. But those who knew him well called him "the refuge of sinners."

The retired life he led at St. Charles prevented him from performing the duties of the parish priest. Like all priests, however, he said Mass daily, read the Breviary, made morning and evening meditations, and heard confessions. Insomnia, the echoes of which

are heard in many of his poems, frequently drove him from his bed into the chapel at all hours of the night, so that his meditations were considerably increased. There can be no doubt that much of his poetry gathers the fruit of these communings with the spiritual world.

Although his priesthood was not exhibited in discharging parish duties, it was present in his life and poetry. Here it is fitting to observe a remarkable feature of his poetry. He is as truly a religious poet as was Crashaw, although he is more than merely religious, notwithstanding the fact that the strictly religious themes of his published poems are comparatively few. As a matter of fact he is a religious poet not by virtue of his themes but more characteristically by virtue of the methods he used in the presentations of subjects both of the natural and moral order. The peculiar essence of this manner consists in the subtle union of natural objects or moral ideas with religious language. In *Life's Ramah,* for instance, Moon is the Herod who slays our Dreams, and Love is the Rachael who laments them. *The Dayspring* and *To The Crucifix* compare the morning light to the spear with which the side of Christ was pierced. The parable of the good Samaritan furnishes the metaphor in *Neighbor,* in which Night is the good Samaritan who repays in the Inn of Sleep the energy spent by Day.

The spirituality inspiring Father Tabb's poetry was but the overflowing of his nature, and never was it more in evidence than when total blindness, which

had been threatening him for many years, actually fell upon him in 1908. The thoughts and feelings of this period are recorded in *A Sunset Song, Going Blind, Loss, The Image-Maker, Blind,* and *Waves.* His last days were made as pleasant as possible by his friends among faculty and students. Slowly, however, like his blindness, death approached. Paralysis made its gradual progress to the vital centers. The end came peacefully at eleven o'clock on the night of November 19, 1909. He was buried in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia.

F. A. L.

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TO A SONGSTER

O little bird, I'd be
A poet like to thee,
Singing my native song—
Brief to the ear, but long
To love and memory.

April, 1902

NATURE

FLOWERS

THE WHITE JESSAMINE

I knew she lay above me,
  Where the casement all the night
Shone, softened with a phosphor glow
  Of sympathetic light,
And that her fledgling spirit pure
  Was pluming fast for flight.

Each tendril throbbed and quickened
  As I nightly climbed apace,
And could scarce restrain the blossoms
  When, anear the destined place,
Her gentle whisper thrilled me
  Ere I gazed upon her face.

I waited, darkling, till the dawn
  Should touch me into bloom,
While all my being panted
  To outpour its first perfume,
When, lo! a paler flower than mine
  Had blossomed in the gloom!

May, 1892

STAR-JESSAMINE

Discerning star from sister star,
  We give to each its name;
But ye, O countless blossoms, are
  In fragrance and in flame
So like that He from whom ye came
Alone discerneth each by name.

Jan. 1894

BROTHERHOOD

Knew not the Sun, sweet Violet,
  The while he gleaned the snow,
That thou in darkness sepulchred
  Wast slumbering below?
Or spun a splendor of surprise
Around him to behold thee rise?

Saw not the Star, sweet Violet,
  What time a drop of dew
Let fall his image from the sky
  Into thy deeper blue?
Nor waxed he tremulous and dim
When rival Dawn supplanted him?

And dreamest thou, sweet Violet,
  That I, the vanished Star,

The Dewdrop, and the morning Sun
Thy closest kinsmen are—
So near that, waking or asleep,
We each and all thine image keep?

1894

THE VIOLET SPEAKS

Think not yon star,
New-found afar,
Love's latest sign;
Nor fondly dream
No fresher beam
Doth on thee shine:
A newer light,
From longer night
Of years, is mine.

July, 1892

TO THE VIOLET

Sweet violet, who knows
From whence thy fragrance flows
Or whither hence it goes?

A pious pilgrim here
To Winter's sepulchre
Thou comest year by year

Alert with balmier store
Than Magdalen of yore
To Love's anointing bore.

Methinks that thou hast been
So oft the go-between
'Twixt sight and things unseen

That with thy wafted breath
Alternate echoeth
Each bank of sundering Death.

March, 1896

TO A WOOD-VIOLET

In this secluded shrine,
O miracle of grace,
No mortal eye but mine
Hath looked upon thy face.

No shadow but mine own
Hath screened thee from the sight
Of heaven, whose love alone
Hath led me to thy light.

Whereof—as shade to shade
Is wedded in the sun—

A moment's glance hath made
Our souls forever one.

April, 1896

BLOSSOM

For this the fruit, for this the seed,
For this the parent tree;
The least to man, the most to God—
A fragrant mystery
Where love, with beauty glorified,
Forgets utility.

Dec. 1892

TO A ROSE

Thou hast not toiled, sweet Rose,
Yet needest rest;
Softly thy petals close
Upon thy breast,
Like folded hands, of labor long oppressed.

Naught knowest thou of sin;
Yet tears are thine.
Baptismal drops within
Thy chalice shine
At morning's birth, at evening's calm decline.

Alas! one day hath told
The tale to thee!
Thy tender leaves enfold
Life's mystery:
Its shadow falls alike on thee and me!

1894

THE PLAINT OF THE ROSE

Said the budding Rose, "All night
Have I dreamed of the joyous light;
How long doth my lord delay!
Come, Dawn, and kiss from mine eyes away
The dewdrops cold and the shadows gray
That hide thee from my sight!"

Said the full-blown Rose, "O Light!
(So fair to the dreamer's sight!)
How long doth the dew delay!
Come back, sweet sister shadows gray,
And lead me home from the world away
To the calm of the cloister Night!"

Oct. 1889

THE WATER-LILY

Whence, O fragrant form of light,
Hast thou drifted through the night,
Swanlike, to a leafy nest,
On the restless waves, at rest?

Art thou from the snowy zone
Of a mountain-summit blown
Or the blossom of a dream,
Fashioned in the foamy stream?

Nay, methinks the maiden moon,
When the daylight came too soon,
Fleeting from her bath to hide,
Left her garment in the tide.

1894

EASTER LILIES

Though long in wintry sleep ye lay,
The powers of darkness could not stay
Your coming at the call of day,
Proclaiming spring.

Nay, like the faithful virgins wise,
With lamps replenished ye arise,

Ere dawn the death-anointed eyes
Of Christ, the king.

April, 1885

EASTER FLOWERS

We are His witnesses; out of the dim,
Dank region of Death we have risen with Him.
Back from our sepulchre rolleth the stone,
And Spring, the bright Angel, sits smiling thereon.

We are His witnesses. See, where we lay
The snow that late bound us is folded away;
And April, fair Magdalen, weeping anon,
Stands flooded with light of the new-risen Sun!

1897

GOLDEN-ROD

As Israel in days of old
Beneath the prophet's rod,
Amid the waters, backward rolled,
A path triumphant trod;
So, while thy lifted staff appears,
Her pilgrim steps to guide,
The autumn journeys on, nor fears
The winter's threatening tide.

Sept. 1893

AUTUMN GOLD

Death in the house, and the golden-rod
A-bloom in the field!
O blossom, how, from the lifeless clod,
When the fires are out and the ashes cold,
Doth a vein that the miners know not yield
Such wealth of gold?

Sept. 1892

FERN SONG

Dance to the beat of the rain, little Fern,
And spread out your palms again,
And say, "Though the sun
Hath my vesture spun,
He had labored, alas, in vain
But for the shade
That the Cloud hath made
And the gift of the Dew and the Rain."
Then laugh and upturn
All your fronds, little Fern,
And rejoice in the beat of the rain!

1894

EASTER

Like a meteor, large and bright,
Fell a golden seed of light

On the field of Christmas night
When the Babe was born;
Then 'twas sepulchred in gloom
Till above His holy tomb
Flashed its everlasting bloom—
Flower of Easter morn.

April, 1883

THE SUPPLIANT

"O Dewdrop, lay thy finger-tip
Of moisture on my fevered lip,"
The noonday Blossom cries.
"Alas, O Dives, dark and deep
The gulf impassable of Sleep
Henceforth between us lies!"

Aug. 1895

FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Behold, before the wintry gale,
Across the sea of night,
How many a fragrant blossom-sail
Comes drifting to the light!

Whence are they? Who hath piloted
Their journey from afar?
The selfsame miracle that led
The Magi and the star.

March, 1895

A RUBRIC

The aster puts its purple on
When flowers begin to fall
To suit the solemn antiphon
Of Autumn's ritual;

And deigns, unwearied, to stand
In robes pontifical
Till Indian Summer leaves the land,
And Winter spreads the pall.

Oct. 1895

CLOVER

Little masters, hat in hand,
Let me in your presence stand
Till your silence solve for me
This your threefold mystery.

Tell me—for I long to know—
How, in darkness there below,
Was your fairy fabric spun,
Spread, and fashioned, three in one.

Did your gossips gold and blue,
Sky and Sunshine, choose for you,
Ere your triple forms were seen,
Suited liveries of green?

Can ye—if ye dwelt indeed
Captives of a prison seed—
Like the Genie, once again
Get you back into the grain?

Little masters, may I stand
In your presence, hat in hand,
Waiting till you solve for me
This your threefold mystery?

Aug. 1894

MORNING AND NIGHT BLOOM

A star and a rosebud white,
  In the morning twilight gray,
The latest blossom of the night,
  The earliest of the day;
The star to vanish in the light,
  The rose to stay.

A star and a rosebud white,
In the evening twilight gray,
The earliest blossom of the night,
The latest of the day;
The one in darkness finding light,
One lost for aye.

1897

MAIDEN BLOOM

Where the youthful rivals meet—
Reddest Rose and whitest Snow—
From a trysting-place so sweet
Which will soonest go?
"Hence with life alone I stray,"
Blushed the flower of balmy breath.
"Mine," the snow-wreath sighed, "to stay
Steadfast e'en in death."

1897

BEACON LIGHTS

Sister blossoms, ye have kept
So near the Master while ye slept
That, as upon the martyr's face,
His light celestial we trace
In yours, revealing dreams that He,

Asleep upon the stormy sea,
Beheld, as though your light alone
His beacon in the darkness shone.

April, 1895

AN APRIL BLOOM

Whence are thou? From what chrysalis
Of silence hast thou come?
What thought in thee finds utterance
Of dateless ages dumb—
Outspeeding in the distance far
The herald glances of a star
As yet unseen?

Wast thou, ere thine awakening here,
In other realms a-bloom?
Or swathed in seamless cerements
Of immemorial gloom,
Till now, as nature's pulses move,
Thou blossomest, a breath of love,
Her lips between?

1897

A LOTUS BLOOM

Was the dream thou wovest me
But a blossom-fantasy?

When it faded from my brain,
Flushed it into flower again?

When thy blossom withereth—
When the fairer flower of death
Weaves its vision—shall the dream
Mine or thine, returning, seem?

1897

SONG OF THE MORNING-GLORIES

We wedded each a star—
  A warrior true,
That plighted faith afar
  In drops of dew.

But comes the cruel dawn;
  The dew is dry;
And we, our lovers gone,
  Lamenting, die.

1897

THE YELLOW CROCUS

Were you, little monarch, crowned
  Under ground?
Or did the daylight make you king

Of the spring?
Ere your blossom-retinue
Came to you,
I, before your majesty,
Bow the knee.

April, 1901

REFLECTION

Where closing water-lilies are
I've sometimes seen the evening star
A-blossom just below,
And I have wondered if there be
No pools in heaven where souls may see
How water-lilies grow.

1902

PERIWINKLE

Periwinkle Magdalen,
Ever near the tomb,
Weeps her hidden Lord again
'Mid the twilight gloom,

Till the wonder of surprise
Clears her overclouded eyes,
And the Resurrection lies
In each chalice-bloom.

1902

A SLEEPING-PLACE

When into the rose
  A ladybird goes
And o'er her couch the petals close,
  Was ever bed
  So canopied
For lids in maiden slumber wed?

1902

WILD FLOWERS

We grow where none but God,
  Life's Gardener,
Upon the sterile sod
  Bestows His care.

Our morn and evening dew—
  The sacrament
That maketh all things new—
  From heaven is sent;

And thither, ne'er in vain,
  We look for aid,
To find the punctual rain
  Or sun or shade,

Appointed hour by hour
To every need,
Alike of parent flower
Or nursling seed;

Till, blossom-duty done,
With parting smile,
We vanish, one by one,
To sleep awhile.

April, 1895

COME TRUE

"Good morrow!" breathed the Blossom.
"Good morrow!" flushed the Dawn.
"Where were you, dear, before the light?
For I was dreaming all the night
That we should meet anon
To drink a dewdrop here today
And then together pass away."

Sept. 1901

THE COWSLIP

It brings my mother back to me
Thy frail familiar form to see,

Which was her homely joy;
And strange that one so weak as thou
Should lift the veil that sunders now
The mother and the boy.

1897

AMID THE ROSES

There was laughter amid the roses,
For it was their natal day;
And the children in the garden were
As light of heart as they.

There were sighs amid the roses,
For the night was coming on;
And the children—weary now of play—
Were ready to be gone.

There are tears amid the roses,
For the children are asleep;
And the silence of the garden makes
The lonely blossoms weep.

1899

THE TOUCH-ME-NOT

So ticklish is my skin
That if you touch my side

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The little seed within
  Will laugh and split me wide.

So, when I see you near
  The mirth-provoking spot,
No wonder that I fear
  And bid you touch-me-not.

Nov. 1904

THE DYING BOY TO THE WIND-FLOWERS

And have ye come again,
  Dim seedling of the dew?
Long waiting have I lain
  In wintriness like you,
Through many a month of pain,
  And wondered if ye knew:

And whether ye, unchanged
  Despite the sundering snow,
When back to light ye ranged,
  My altered face would know
Or deem the heart estranged
  That late had loved you so.

But now with glances sweet
  Ye've wandered back today,

Your lagging friend to meet
And chide his long delay.
Behold, with willing feet
I follow! Lead the way!

Feb. 1896

THE FLOWERS

They are not ours,
The fleeting flowers,
But lights of God
That through the sod
Flash upwards from the world beneath—
That region peopled wide with death—
And tell us, in each subtle hue,
That life renewed is passing through
Our world again to seek the skies,
Its native realm of Paradise.

How brief their day!
They cannot stay;
Our mother earth
Beholds their birth
And spreads her ample bosom deep
Some relic of their stay to keep,
And each in benediction flings
A virtue from its dainty wings;

But lo! she treasures it in vain;
It blooms and vanishes again.

1882

TREES

IN MY ORANGE-GROVE

Orbs of autumnal beauty, breathed to light
From blooms of May,
Rounded between the touch of lengthening night
And lessening day,
Flushed with the summer fulness that the spring
(Fair seer!) foretold,
The circle of three seasons compassing
In spheres of gold.

1894

MISTLETOE

To the cradle-bough of a naked tree,
Benumbed with ice and snow,
A Christmas dream brought suddenly
A birth of mistletoe.

The shepherd stars from their fleecy cloud
Strode out on the night to see;

The Herod north-wind blustered loud
To rend it from the tree.

But the old year took it for a sign
And blessed it in his heart:
"With prophecy of peace divine
Let now my soul depart."

Dec. 1883

CHERRY BLOOM

Frailest and first to stand
Upon the border-land
From darkness shriven,
In livery of death
Thou utterest the breath
And light of heaven.

Though profitless thou seem
As doth a poet's dream,
Apart from thee
Nor limb nor laboring root
May load with ripened fruit
The parent tree.

March, 1895

EXALTATION

O leaf upon the highest bough,
The poet of the woods art thou
  To whom alone 'tis given—
The farthest from thy place of birth—
To hold communion with the earth
  Nor lose the light of heaven.

O leaf upon the topmost height,
Amid thy heritage of light
  Unsheltered by a shade,
'Tis thine the loneliness to know
That leans for sympathy below
  Nor finds what it hath made.

May, 1895

THE TREE

Planted by the Master's hand
Steadfast in thy place to stand,
While the ever-changing year
Clothes or strips thy branches bare;
Lending not a leaf to hold
Warmth against the winter's cold;
Lightening not a limb the less
For the summer's sultriness;

Nay, thy burden heavier made,
That within thy bending shade
Thankless multitudes, oppressed,
There may lay them down and rest.
Soul, upon thy Calvary
Wait; the Christ will come to thee.

Sept. 1895

THE PINE-TREE

With whispers of futurity
And echoes of the past,
Twin birds a shelter find in thee
Against the wintry blast—

The fledgling Hope, that preens her wing,
Too timorous to fly,
And Memory, that comes to sing
Her coronach and die.

Nov. 1892

LIVERY

Old-fashioned raiment suits the tree:
Though flouting winds are fain
To strip the foliage, presently

He patterns it again;
Fastidious of chivalry,
Rejecting as in scorn
All other than the panoply
His ancestors have worn.

1897

FULFILLED

'Twas August; and a Gypsy Breeze
Came wandering through the wood.
"Our fortunes!" cried the lover Trees
That first before her stood.

"Sir Hickory the king shall be
Of all this wide demesne;
And you," she added tenderly,
"Fair Maple, shall be queen."

They listened, smiling as she spoke,
Nor heeded what she told,
Till came the morning when they woke
Arrayed in red and gold.

1910

WOOD-GRAIN

This is the way that the sap-river ran
From the root to the top of the tree—
Silent and dark,

Under the bark,
Working a wonderful plan
That the leaves never know,
And the branches that grow
On the brink of the tide never see.

July, 1901

RAIMENT

"How beautiful your *feathers* be!"
The redbird sang to the tulip-tree,
New garbed in autumn gold.
"Alas!" the bending branches sighed,
"They cannot like your *leaves* abide
To keep us from the cold!"

1902

VICTIMS

Behold, throughout the land,
On many a smoking pyre
The maple-martyrs stand
Ablaze in autumn fire.

The winds are hushed in prayer,
Till, falling one by one,
Dumbfounded leaves declare
The sacrifice is done.

Oct. 1903

THE ACORN

I am the heir, the Acorn small,
To whom as tributaries all,
The root, the stem, the branches tall,
Do homage round my castle wall.

And yet, obedient to the call
Of Earth, through Death's opposing thrall—
Of wealth a seeming prodigal—
To Life's dominion must I fall.

1902

WINTER TREES

Like champions of old,
  Their garments at their feet,
Defiant of the cold,
  The wrestling winds they meet;
Anon, if victors found,
  With vernal trophies crowned.

1902

LEAVES

All your sylvan prophecies
  But a phantom sigh!
"Yea, we listened to the breeze

Tempting us to fly
Like the summer birds and bees
From the branches high;
Now beneath our naked trees
Shadowless we lie,
In the autumn mysteries
Doomed, alas, to die."

1910

LEAF AND SOUL

LEAF

Let go the Limb?
My life in him
Alone is found.
Come night, come day,
'Tis here I stay
Above the sapless ground.

SOUL

Let go the warm
Lip-kindled form
And upward fly?
Come joy, come pain,
I here remain,
Despite the yearning sky.

A sudden frost—and lo!
Both Leaf and Soul let go.

Nov. 1902

BIRDS

THE SWALLOW

Skim o'er the tide,
And from thy pinions fling
The sparkling water-drops,
Sweet child of spring!
Bathe in the dying sunshine, warm and bright,
Till ebbs the last receding wave of light.

Swift glides the hour,
But what its flight to thee?
Thine own is fleeter far;
E'en now to me
Thou seem'st upon futurity anon
To beckon thence the tardy present on.

The eye in vain
Pursues with subtle glance
Thy dim, delirious course
Through heaven's expanse:
Vanished thy form upon the wings of thought,
Ere yet its place the lagging vision caught.

Again thou'rt here,
A slanting arrow sent
From yon fair-tinted bow,
In promise bent;
As when, erewhile, the gentle bird of love
Poised her white wing the new-born land above.

A seeming shade,
Scarce palpable in form,
Yet thine, alas, the change
Of calm and storm!
The veering passions of my stronger soul
Alike the throbbings of thy heart control.

For day is done,
And cloyed of long delight,
Like me thou welcomest
The sober night;
Like me, aweary, sinkest on that breast
That woos all nature to her silent rest.

July, 1883

FORESHADOWED

Swallow, with the spring returning,
In thine absence change hath been.
Dost thou mark the lonely places

Where no more my love is seen?
Never maiden welcomed thee
Home with lighter heart than she.

Flitting in the golden sunshine
Oft thy shadow o'er us strayed.
Still we smiled, nor recked the warning
Of a life-dividing shade;
Now, alas, the world to me
Mourns that doomful prophecy.

1897

THE BUTTERFLY

Leafless, stemless, floating flower,
From a rainbow's scattered bower,
Like a bubble of the air
Blown by fairies, tell me where
Seed or scion I may find
Bearing blossoms of thy kind.

1894

KILLDEE

Kildee! Kildee! far o'er the lea
At twilight comes the cry.

Killdee! a marsh-mate answereth
Across the shallow sky.

Killdee! Killdee! thrills over me
A rhapsody of light,
As star to star gives utterance
Between the day and night.

Killdee! Killdee! O Memory,
The twin birds, Joy and Pain,
Like shadows parted by the sun,
At twilight meet again!

March, 1886

THE MOCKING-BIRD

O heart that cannot sleep for song!
Behold, I wake thee
And drink, as from a fountain strong,
Thy midnight melody,
That, poured upon the thirsting silence, seems
Fresh from the shade of dreams.

My spirit, like the sapless bough
Of some long-wintered tree,
Feels suddenly the life that now
Sets all thy passion free,

And, flushed as in the wakening strength of wine,
Leaps heavenward with thine.

May, 1893

THE HUMMING-BIRD

A flash of harmless lightning,
A mist of rainbow dyes,
The burnished sunbeams brightening,
From flower to flower he flies;

While wakes the nodding blossom,
But just too late to see
What lip hath touched her bosom
And drained her nectary.

Oct. 1891

THE SNOW-BIRD

When snow, like silence visible,
Hath hushed the summer bird,
Thy voice, a never-frozen rill
Of melody, is heard.

But when from winter's lethargy
The buds begin to blow,

Thy voice is mute, and suddenly
Thou vanishest like snow.

1897

TO THE WOOD-ROBIN

The wooing air is jubilant with song,
And blossoms swell
As leaps thy liquid melody along
The dusky dell,
Where silence, late supreme, foregoes her wonted spell.

Ah, whence, in sylvan solitudes remote,
Hast learned the lore
That breeds delight in every echoing note,
The woodlands o'er;
As when through slanting sun descends the quickening shower?

Thy hermitage is peopled with the dreams
That gladden sleep;
Here fancy dallies with delirious themes
'Mid shadows deep,
Till eyes, unused to tears, with wild emotion weep.

We rise, alas, to find out visions fled!
But thine remain.

Night weaves of golden harmonies the thread,
And fills thy brain
With joys that overflow in love's awakening strain.

Yet thou, from mortal influence apart,
Seek'st naught of praise;
The empty plaudits of the emptier heart
Taint not thy lays:
Thy Maker's smile alone thy tuneful bosom sways.

Teach me, thou warbling eremite, to sing
Thy rhapsody;
Nor borne on vain ambition's vaunting wing,
But led of thee
To rise from earthly dreams to hymn eternity.

June, 1889

THE DEAD THRUSH

Love of nest and mate and young
Woke the music of his tongue,
While upon the fledgling's brain
Soft it fell as scattered grain,
There to blossom tone for tone
Into echoes of his own.
Doth the passion wholly die
When the fountainhead is dry?

Nay, as vapor from the sea
Lives the dream eternally;
Soon the silent clouds again
Melt in rhapsodies of rain.

March, 1896

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL

From yonder wooded hill
I hear the whip-poor-will,
Whose mate or wandering echo answers him
Athwart the lowlands dim.

He calls not through the day;
But when the shadows gray
Across the sunset draw their lengthening veil,
He tells his twilight tale.

What unforgotten wrong
Haunts the ill-omened song?
What scourge of fate has left its loathed mark
Upon the cringing dark?

"Whip! Whip-poor-will!"
O sobbing voice, be still!
Tell not again, O melancholy bird,
The legend thou hast heard!

Feb. 1901

OVERFLOW

Hush!
With sudden gush
As from a fountain sings in yonder bush
The hermit thrush.

Hark!
Did ever lark
With swifter scintillations fling the spark
That fires the dark?

Again,
Like April rain
Of mist and sunshine mingled, moves the strain
O'er hill and plain.

Strong
As love, O Song,
In flame or torrent sweep through life along
O'er grief and wrong.

1902

IN THE NEST OF THE LARK

Here the silentest of things
Lowliest lies;

Where with palpitating wings,
Swift to rise,
Wakes the soul that sweetest sings
And the loftiest anthem brings
From the skies.

Jan. 1901

THE DOVE

O bird that seem'st in solitude
O'er tearful memories to brood,
What sorrow hast thou known?
Or is thy voice an oracle
Interpreting the souls that tell
No vision of their own?

Thy life, alas! is loneliness
Wherein, with shadowy caress,
Soft preludings of pain
Tell that some captive of the heart
Is preening, ready to depart,
And ne'er to come again.

Sept. 1902

ROBIN REDBREAST

When Christ was taken from the rood,
One thorn upon the ground,

Still moistened with the Precious Blood,
An early robin found,
And wove it crosswise in his nest,
Where, lo, it reddened all his breast!

1902

BARTIMEUS TO THE BIRD

Had I no revelation but thy voice,
No word but thine,
Still would my soul in certitude rejoice
That love divine
Thy heart, his hidden instrument, employs,
To waken mine.

Nov. 1898

PRECURSORS

The little birds that hither bring
The earliest messages of spring
Seem, fountain-like, to everflow
With music melted from the snow.

So sweet the tidings that they tell
The hidden buds begin to swell,

Till suddenly, with lifted ears,
The leafy multitude appears.

1902

IN THE NEST

O world beneath the mother's wing,
Secure from harm,
The heart so near the sheltered thing
To keep it warm!

No longer needed now the light
Of heaven above;
The very darkness breathes a plight
Of deeper love.

1902

A PAIR OF SWALLOWS

Together first they plan a nest,
And where and how to build it best,
Ere *she* begins from day to day
To count the eggs she has to lay.
Then *he* must help her sit and watch
Until the little household hatch,

And then, on pinions strong, prepare
To satisfy the hungry brood.

Soon they are bold enough to wing
Short flights with endless twittering;
And then provide the fitting food
Long voyages in upper air.
For southward, swifter than the snow
From ghostland speeding, must they go.

1902

IN SHADOW

Heeds yonder star thy song,
O warbler of the night?
"I know not, for the way is long
That leads unto the light.
But as the music of the spheres
A twinkling silence here appears,
Perchance my warbling from afar
Appears a star."

1923

CHIMNEY STACKS

In winter's cold and summer's heat
The hospitable chimneys greet

Their never-failing guests;
For when the sparks are upward gone,
The swallows downward come anon
To build their neighboring nests.

1899

A DUET

A little yellow bird above,
A little yellow flower below;
The little bird can *sing* the love
That bird and blossom know;
The blossom has no song nor wing,
But *breathes* the love he cannot sing.

1899

THE DOVE

A tuneful mist above a silent sea
O'er which thou broodest, seems thy voice to me;
A moan of widowed memory above
A tideless depth of erst impetuous love.

E'en as the main, thy circling monody
Upon the lone horizon meets the sky,
Where faintly flickers, in the distance far,
The afterglow of hope's departed star.

Pour forth, sweet bird, thy requiem; and lo!
Night's dreamy waves of sympathy o'erflow
To soothe thy pain, while thoughts, attuned to thine,
Melt into twilight tenderness divine.

1882

THE BOBOLINK

Your notes are few,
But sweet your song
  As honey-dew;
  And all day long,
Dear Bobolink, a-listening,
I never tire to hear you sing.

1899

THE BLUEBIRD

When God had made a host of them,
One little flower still lacked a stem
  To hold its blossom blue;
So into it He breathed a song,
And suddenly, with petals strong
  As wings, away it flew.

1899

MATINS

Still sing the morning stars remote
  With echoes now unheard
Save in the scintillating note
  Of some dawn-wakened bird

Whose heart, a fountain of the light,
  Prolongs the limpid strain
Till on the borderland of night
  The stars begin again.

THE HOSPITAL BIRD

A breath of joy, sweet bird,
  A solace to each prisoner of pain,
  A pledge of hope returning, is thy strain
Through the long watches heard.

The soul in sleepless sighs,
  Or else in dreams, through panting hours, the prey,
  Hails in thy voice a prophecy of day
Ere yet the darkness flies.

The tender babe, new-born,
  The dying mother startled by its wail,
  The fevered brow, the cheek of madness pale,
The bosom rest-forlorn,

Each, with emotion strong,
  Heaves through the billowed agonies of night,
  Whilst over them, a glittering foam of light,
Drifts thy unshadowed song.

How vast its influence sweet!
  How small the voiceful compass of thy throat,
  Whereof each silver scintillating note
A thousand blessings greet!

Teach me the power divine
  Some light o'er dark humanity to fling,
  Some song of hope celestial to sing,
Dear to all hearts as thine.

1882

THE FALL OF THE SPARROW

Are you dying, little bird?
"Yea, the song so often heard
And the gift of suffering
Back to God again I bring.

"All in each, and each in all,
Counting in the sparrow's fall,
By the power of sinless pain
(His and ours) He cleanseth stain.

Suffering, He deigned to die
Poor and innocent as I."

1907

THE WIND

TO THE SUMMER WIND

Art thou the selfsame wind that blew
  When I was but a boy?
Thy voice is like the one I knew,
  And yet the thrill of joy
Has softened to a sadder tone—
Perchance the echo of my own.

Beside a sea of memories
  In solitude I dwell;
Upon the shore forsaken lies,
  Alas, no murmuring shell!
Are all the voices lost to me
Still wandering the world with thee?

Nov. 1892

SOOTHSAYERS

The winds that, gypsy-wise, foretold
  The fortune of today,

At twilight, with the gathered gold
Of sunset, stole away;

And of their cloud accomplices
That prophesied the rain
Upon the night-forsaken skies
No vestiges remain.

Dec. 1900

THE WIND

Now, in his joy,
A whistling boy;
Now, sombre and defiant,
His every breath
A threat of death,
A blind, demented giant.

1901

FUGITIVES

Tonight, far inland from the sea,
The winds, a frightened legion, flee
With wailings of distress;
While cataracts from many a steep
Plunge headlong, foaming to the deep,
To crown their restlessness.

Anon, where each has passed away.
The shaken reed, the scattered spray.

1902

THE BREEZE

Through thee the ocean knows
The fragrance of the rose;
And inlands, far away,
The blossom of the spray.

Through thee, to every wave
A whisper of the grave;
And to each grave a sigh
Of life that cannot die.

June, 1904

AUTUMN WIND

It sings, and every flower and weed
Bestows a tributary seed
  Of life again to live.
I listen, but a sterile tear,
Alas! no recompense to bear,
  Is all I have to give.

1902

RACERS

The winds from many a cloudy mane
Shake off the sweat of gathering rain
  And whicker with delight;
No slope of pasture-lands they need,
Whereon to rest or drink or feed,
Their life the rapture of the speed,
  The frenzy of the flight.

June, 1903

A WIND-CALL

Dust thou art, and unto dust,
Playfellow, return thou must;
Lingering death it is to stay
In the prison-house of clay—
Bricks of Egypt, year by year,
Walling up a sepulchre.

Better far the soul to free
From its cold captivity,
And with us, thy comrades, go
Wheresoe'er we list to blow.
Come, for soon again to dust,
Playfellow, return thou must.

March, 1904

CHORISTERS

O wind and waters, ye alone
Have chanted the primeval tone
  Since Nature first began.
All other voices change, but ye
Abide, the soul of harmony
  Interpreting the man.

He listens, and his heart is fain
To fashion an immortal strain;
  Yet his sublimest lay
Is but the music of a tongue
Attuned to silence, and among
  The echoes dies away.

Sept. 1903

THE WIND

A gentle sigh of half regret
  Thou breathest o'er me now,
Scarce wakening the leafy shade
  That trembles on my brow;
And yet of direful visitants
  The sternest thou.

Controlling all, of none controlled,
  O'er earth and sky and sea,

Where'er thou listest, wandering,
A scourge or balm to be,
Thou bendest all to reverence
Thy majesty.

Thou scatterest the fleecy clouds,
And herdest them again
To pour upon the harvest lands
The bounty of the rain;
Then winnowest with lusty flail
The ripened grain.

In lordly blessings lordliest,
In malediction worst,
Thou fannest from a shadeless wing,
On multitudes accurst,
Wan famine, reeking pestilence,
And scarlet thirst.

The anger of the storm is thine,
The terror of the wave;
Old ocean in thy foamy wrath
Howls, smitten as a slave,
Or at thy whisperings of calm
Forgets to rave.

We see thee not, though everywhere
Thou compassest the eye;
Thyself, in silence mystical,

The subtle harmony
Of Nature's tuneful choir divine
Dost all supply.

Mute spirit, if thy pinions waft,
Unbidden o'er my soul,
The thoughts that as a tide of dreams
Involuntary roll,
Be thine the gift of utterance,
My tongue control!

1882

CLOUDS AND SKY

THE CLOUD

Far on the brink of day
Thou standest as the herald of the dawn,
Where fades the night's last flickering spark away
Ere the first dewdrop's gone.

Above the eternal snows
By winter scattered on the mountain height
To shroud the centuries, thy visage glows
With a prophetic light.

Calm is thine awful brow;
As when thy presence shrined divinity

Between the flaming cherubim, so now
Its shadow clings to thee.

Yet as an angel mild
Thou, in the torrid noon, with sheltering wing
Dost o'er the earth, as to a weary child,
A balm celestial bring.

And when the evening dies,
Still to thy fringed vesture cleaves the light—
The last sad glimmer of her tearful eyes
On the dark verge of night.

So, soon thy glories wane!
Thou too must mourn the rose of morning shed:
Cold creeps the fatal shadow o'er thy train
And settles on thy head.

And while the wistful eye
Yearns for the charm that wooed its ravished gaze,
The sympathy of nature wakes a sigh
And thus its thought betrays:

"Thou, like the cloud, my soul,
Dost in thyself of beauty nought possess;
Devoid the light of heaven, a vapor foul,
The veil of nothingness!"

March, 1877

ABSOLVED

Far floating o'er its native fen,
The evening cloud, like Magdalen—
  Her penitential tears
Assuaged of love, her sins forgiven—
Upborne upon a waveless heaven
  Of radiant rest, appears.

Feb. 1894

THE SHOWER

  Against the royal blue
  A mist rebellious flew—
A night-born, wind-uplifted shade
That for an angry moment stayed,
  Then wept itself away.

  The earth with moistened eyes
  Beholds the sunlit skies
Again, but never to forget
The cloud whose life-drops mingle yet
  With her maternal clay.

Aug. 1895

THE DEWS

We come and go as the breezes blow,
  But whence or where

Hath ne'er been told in the legends old
By the dreaming seer.
The welcome rain to the parching plain
And the languid leaves,
The rattling hail on the burnished mail
Of the serried sheaves,
The silent snow on the wintry brow
Of the aged year,
Wends each his way in the track of day
From a clouded sphere;
But still as the fog in the dismal bog
Where the shifting sheen
Of the spectral lamp lights the marshes damp,
With a flash unseen
We drip through the night from the starlids bright
In the sleeping bowers,
And deep in their breast is our perfumed rest
Through the darkened hours;
But again with the day we are up and away
With our stolen dyes,
To paint all the shrouds of the drifting clouds
In the eastern skies.

Dec. 1881

THE RAIN AND THE DEW

"Thou hast fallen," said the dewdrop
To a sister drop of rain,

"But wilt thou, wedded with the dust,
In banishment remain?"

"Nay, dewdrop, but anon with thee—
The lowlier born than I—
Uplifted shall I seek again
My native home, the sky."

Feb. 1892

A LEGACY

Do you remember, little cloud,
This morning when you lay—
A mist along the river—what
The waters had to say?

And how the many-coloured flowers
That on the margin grew
All promised when the day was done
To leave their tints to you?

1899

FOG

The ghost am I
Of winds that die

Alike on land or sea,
In silence deep
To shroud and keep
Their mournful memory.

A spirit white
I stalk the night,
Or, shadowing the skies,
Forbid the sun
To look upon
My noonday mysteries.

March, 1903

THE TRUANT

Listen! 'tis the Rain
Coming home again;
Not as when he went away,
Silent, but in tears to say
He is sorry to have gone
With the Mist that lured him on;
And he promises anew
Nevermore the like to do.
Alas! no sooner shines the sun
Than the selfsame deed is done.

1902

WINTER RAIN

Rain on the roof and rain
On the burial-place of grain;
To one a voice in vain;
To one o'er hill and plain
The pledge of life again.

Rain on the sterile sea,
That hath no need of thee,
Nor keeps thy memory—
'Tis thou that teachest me
The range of charity.

June, 1905

THE RAINBOW

What fruit of all thy blossom shed
Remaineth unto me?
"A dream, whereon thy fancy fed,
Shall spin anon her golden thread,
And then, of fetters free,
Arise with radiant pinions spread
To heights of poesy."

Feb. 1895

THE TURNS OF THE WATER-COURSE

It falls from heaven upon the hill,
And hurries down to turn the mill
  And grind the ripened grain;
Then, duty done, it turns away,
And like a spirit, turned to spray,
  It turns to heaven again.

1902

ICE

I once was water, and again
  My former self shall be;
  No keep of Cold
  May captive hold
A spirit of the Sea.
Beyond this prison wall of Pain,
  So echoless and chill,
Despite his guardsmen Frost and Snow,
Anon through Dimple-gate I go
  To wander where I will.

1902

THE MIST

Eurydice eludes the dark
  To follow Orpheus, the lark

That leads her to the dawn
With rhapsodies of star-delight,
Till, looking backward in the flight,
He finds that she is gone.

Dec. 1900

CLOUDS

Born of the waters are we,
Clean of original stain;
Fresh from the salt of the sea,
Pure from the marsh and the plain.

Borne of the breezes above
Whithersoever they go,
Made in a mystical love,
Mothers of rain and snow.

1902

THE SEA

"VOX CLAMANTIS"

O sea, forever calling to the shore
With menace or caress—
A voice like his unheeded that of yore
Cried in the wilderness;

A deep forever yearning unto deep,
For silence out of sound—
Thy restlessness the cradle of a sleep
That thou hast never found.

March, 1892

SUNSET AT SEA

Lo, where he sinks from sight
The day forgets her light;
Nor breathes a wave
To break the silence sweet
Where sky and ocean meet
Above his grave.

Feb. 1892

INTERPRETED

Lo, eastward o'er the billows white
Faint-smiling wakes the child of night
From dreams all rosy with delight.
What means, O sea, thy moaning?

Full noon; and o'er a cloudless sky
Soft winnowings of fragrance fly:
In all the land no shadows lie.
What means, O sea, thy moaning?

Far westward, o'er a dying glow,
Long funeral waves of darkness flow;
Ah, well-a-day! too late I know
What means, O sea, thy moaning!

Sept. 1881

A SIGH OF THE SEA

"Why is it?" once the Ocean asked,
As on a summer's day,
Basking beneath a cloudless sky,
In musing rest he lay,

"Why is it, that, unruffled still,
The welkin's brow I see,
While mine with racking wind and tide
Deep-furrowed oft must be?

"Her richest gems, by night displayed,
Man's filching grasp defy;
But safety for my treasures none,
Though buried deep they lie.

"The hands that from her diadem
In reverence recoil,
Are bold my depths to penetrate
And of their wealth despoil.

"A thousand ships with cruel keel
My writhing waves divide,
But mariner hath never steered
Athwart her tranquil tide.

"Why is it thus, that rest to her
And toil to me is given;
That she the blessing ever meets,
And I, the curse of Heaven?"

The Ether heard. Through all her depths
A deeper azure spread,
And to the murmuring Ocean thus,
With radiant smile, she said:

"Who cleaveth to the earth, as thou,
Ne'er knows tranquillity;
Naught pulses in my bosom wide
But God, whose own am I."

1897

SHELL-TINTS

Sea-shell, whence the rainbow dyes,
Flashing in thy sunset skies?
Thou wast in the penal brine
When appeared the saving sign.
"Yea, but when the bow was bended,

Hope, that hung it in the sky,
Down into the deep descended
Where the starless shadows lie;
And with tender touch of glory
Traced in living lines of love,
On my lowly walls, the story
Written in the heavens above."

1897

SAND

Sterile sister though I be,
Twinborn to the barren sea,
Yet of all things fruitful we
Wait the end; and presently,
Lo, they are not! Then to me
(Children to the nurse's knee)
Come the billows fresh and free,
Breathing immortality.

March, 1895

THE MARSH

The woods have voices, and the sea
Her choral-song and threnody;
But thou alike to sun and rain
Dost mute and motionless remain.

As pilgrims to the shrine of sleep,
Through all thy solemn spaces creep
The tides—a moment on thy breast
To pause in sacramental rest;
Then, flooded with the mystery,
To sink reluctant to the sea,
In landward loneliness to yearn
Till to thy bosom they return.

Jan. 1896

THE SIREN STREAM TO THE OUTCAST

Come, for my waves that I can never know
Of calm bestow;
And thou, alas, like them, hast wandered far!
Come, erring star—
Aweary now—come take thy fill of rest
Upon my breast.

Come, for they call thee. Lean thy listening ear
And thou shalt hear
How soft the sigh that woos thee to the deep
Of endless sleep,
Wherein the past and all its passion seem
A vanished dream.

Behold, I cleanse whate'er of soilure clings
To drooping wings:

Whate'er abides of dust or cleaving clay
I purge away;
Like fire, refining, but apart from pain,
All dross and stain.

The fever-flame that throught thy being burns,
My bosom yearns
To quench. Behold, the ripples run to meet
A sister's feet,
With murmurs, not of scorn, but tenderness,
To sooth and bless.

April, 1896

TIDES

Like inland streams, O sea,
Through joy and pain
All nature dreams of thee;
Nor more appears
Thy life in mist or rain
Than in our tears.

July, 1909

MOUNTAIN-BORN

How hast thou, little spring,
The heart to sing,

Leaving thy lofty home
For yonder plain,
Whence ne'er again
Returning canst thou come?

"Nay, not as now I go;
But mute as snow,"
The laughing wave replies;
"To crown the height,
In vapors white
Again I nightly rise."

June, 1907

BEYOND

The river to the sea,
In language of the land,
Interpreter would be
Of life beyond the strand;
Of billowy heights that never fall
When winds have gone their way;
Of waving forests, dark and tall,
Of flocks and herds and fertile vales,
Of warbling birds and blossom-spray
That scents the wandering gales.
Alas! 'tis all a mystery!
She does not understand.

THE DAYSPRING

What hand with spear of light
Hath cleft the side of Night,
And from the red wound wide
Fashioned the Dawn, his bride?

Was it the deed of Death?
Nay; but of Love, that saith,
"Henceforth be Shade and Sun,
In bonds of Beauty, one."

1894

DAWN

Love told a Star the vision that beguiled
His slumber; and the Darkness, hearing, smiled.

Nov. 1898

DAWN

Behold, as from a silver horn,
The sacerdotal night
Outpours upon his latest-born
The chrism of the light;
And bids him to the altar come,
Whereon for sacrifice
(A lamb before his shearers, dumb,)
A victim shadow lies.

Oct. 1895

THE FOUNDLING

What time the wandering mother night
  Made ready to depart,
A new-born, trembling dream of light
  She laid upon my heart.
"Keep it," she sighed, and bending low
  Wept o'er it where it lay;
Then, suddenly as April snow,
  Went vanishing away.

1897

DAYBREAK

Thou hast not looked on Yesterday
  Nor shalt Tomorrow see;
Upon thy solitary way
  Is none to pilot thee:—
Thou comest to thine own
A stranger and alone.

And yet, alas, thy countenance
  To us familiar seems;
The wonder of thy wakening glance,
  The vanishing of dreams,
Is like an old refrain
From silence come again.

1902

A QUERY

Was it the dawn that waked the bird
With yonder spark?
Or had the sleeping darkness stirred
Before the Lark?

For either rival to declare
The winds are loth;
And blossoms, nodding everywhere,
Affirm for both.

April, 1893

A FLEETING GUEST

Through the foul arch of night
On airy pinions white
It came to me,
And in the smile of day
All beautiful it lay,
Yet pale to see.

"Whence comest thou?" I cried;
A silence soft replied:
"From regions vast—
The ocean gave me birth
And thence through heaven to earth
My spirit passed."

As o'er an elfin bright
I bent with strange delight,
But all too near;
For lo! my breathing warm
Dissolved the magic charm
Into a tear!

1882

LIFE'S RAMAH

Day after day
The Herod Morn
Of Dreams doth slay
The latest-born;
And Love, like Rachel o'er her dead,
Will not again be comforted.

Dec. 1898

THE DAWN-BURST

Lo, now the dead volcano Night
In silence cold
Throbs; and the prisoned lava, long controlled,
Bursts forth in molten gold—
A torrent mightier far than rolled
From Aetna or Vesuvius of old,

Or ever prophet on the sacred height
Of song foretold.

1882

MATIN-SONG

Arise! Arise!
Dawns not the day without thy wakening eyes;
The mist that on them lies
Delays the blossom of the eastern skies.
'Tis at their light alone the darkness flies,
And night, despairing, dies;
Behold thine altar free for sacrifice!
Arise! Arise!

Oct. 1892

HEREDITY

The children of the night,
The star, the glowworm bright,
The dewdrop clear,
In livery of light
Undimmed appear.

The children of the Day,
The cleaving shadows gray,

Wan vigils keep,
Twice on their twilight way
His doom to weep.

1923

REGRET

What pleading passion of the dark
Hath left the Morning pale?
She listens! "'Tis, alas, the Lark,
And not the Nightingale!
O for the gloom-encircled sphere,
Whose solitary bird
Outpours for Love's awakening ear
What noon hath never heard!"

March, 1894

BRINK-SONG

A note so near the dawn
Too timid was to stay
Till shadows all were gone,
But, dreamlike, sped away
While paled the hesitating sky
For Day to bloom or Night to die.

1902

LIFE'S GULF STREAM

Stars that in the darkness bloom
Wither in the light;
Dreams begotten of the gloom
Take their morning flight.

And, the gleam of fancy gone,
From the current of the dawn
Tidal memories are drawn
To the coast of Night.

1910

INSCRIPTIONS

The epitaph of night
The sunbeams write;
The epitaph of day,
The shadows gray;
One requiem of wind and wave
Above each grave.

May, 1906

THE DIAL

A dreamer in the dark, I grow
Prophetic in the morning glow;
Thereon a slender shade I throw—

A sign in Babylon to say,
"Thou'rt in the balance weighed, O day,
Found wanting, and shalt waste away."
And now in Night's pavilion, all
The stars are writing on the wall,
"Behold, thy kingdom too must fall."

1910

LIGHT AND SHADOW

"I love you, little maid,"
Said the Sunbeam to the Shade,
As all day long she shrank away before him;
But at twilight, ere he died,
She was weeping at his side;
And he felt her tresses softly trailing o'er him.

1899

A SUNSET

What means it, Lord? No Daniel
In Nature's banquet-hall
Appears, thy messenger, to spell
The writing on the wall.

Is it the Babylonian doom,—
A kingdom passed away—

A midnight monarch to assume
The majesty of Day?

May, 1899

IDEALS

Could Day demand a gift of Night,
And Night the boon bestow,
'Twould be that heaven of star-delight
Where Dreams departed go.

Could Night the gift demand, and Day
The benefit confer,
'Twould be upon his twilight way
A lengthened hour with her.

Dec. 1897

SHEET-LIGHTNING

A glance of love or jealousy,
It flashes to and fro,
A swift sultanic majesty,
Through Night's seraglio;

Where many a starry favorite
In reverence profound

Awaits with palpitating light
A step without a sound.

Sept. 1895

NIGHT-BORN

The fairest blossom of the light
Was nurtured in the womb of night,
An alien to the sun;
And to her bosom must she need
Recall each love-selected seed
When blossom-time is done.

And we—by baptism of sleep
Her children—waken but to keep
The memory of charms
And promises that ne'er too soon
Despite the blandishments of noon
Restore us to her arms.

Sept. 1909

SECURITY

The noonday smiles to hear
The oft-repeated tale
Of shadows lurking near
Her sunbeams to assail;

Nor heeds the placid night
A prophecy of doom
To drown her stars in light
As fathomless as gloom.

Jan. 1896

GONE

The sunshine seeks thee, and the day,
Without thee lonely, wears away:
And where the twilight shadows pass
And miss thy footprints on the grass,
They weep; whereat the breezes sigh,
And, following to find thee, die.

1897

ADIEU

"Farewell!" the parting Day
Re-echoes, "Fare thee well!
I go the darkened way
Whence none returns to tell
Of those that hither stray
What fate befell."

1902

THE HAUNTED MOON

Still closer doth she cowl with night
  Her visage white,
To hide her from the spectre grey
  Of yesterday,
Deep buried in his sepulchre
  To all but her.

July, 1906

MUTATION

Till comes the crescent Moon,
  We worship each a Star;
But in the region of Noon,
  Alike forgotten are
The lesser and the larger light
  That ruled the destinies of Night.

Anon, the darkness near,
  Within their dim domain
To Memory appear
  The twilight Gods again;
And Reverence beneath their sway
  Forgets the Sovereignty of Day.

Oct. 1905

ONSET

Lo, where the routed shadows pass,
Upon each lifted blade of grass
  The tokens of a fray—
Pale life-drops from the heart of night,
Mute witnesses of sudden flight
  Before the host of day.

Oct. 1892

SYMPATHY

'Tis in the silent isthmus-hour of time,
Where light and darkness have alternate birth,
And nature in her agony sublime
  Shrouds with a veil of mystery the earth
That, as a mist low-creeping through the gloom,
A wandering shadow clasps a nameless tomb—
All night the cypress sighs; the waning moon
  Sinks, pale with vigil, where the sun has set;
The morning wakes; and, lo! an altar strewn—
  A grave with deathless sympathy is wet.

1882

A PRELUDE OF NIGHT

Over the waters far there came,
At the birth of the evening star, a voice

Like music low;
Unto the heart alone it spake,
With the stress of the ocean tone.

"Mine is the reign of peace," it said;
"Day's restless throbbings cease in me;
The fevered glow
Of her o'erwearied feet subsides
Beneath my kisses sweet.

"My starry arch doth link this calm
Of twilight to the brink of her
Pale sister-hour,
While trembling shadows weave in one
All stranger souls that grieve.

"Light is the keen-edged blade that cleaves
The spirits kindred made in dreams;
My gentle power
Breathes into souls apart a sigh
From the day's breaking heart.

"Noon hath no gift of tears; her eye
Burns with a glance that sears the wings
Of tender thought;
And from its lidless fire, aghast,
All fairy throngs retire.

"Night is the elder child of God;
His brooding spirit mild, as ere

The light was wrought,
Still for its wonted rest returns
To her dark-sheltered breast."

1882

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

The day—of sorrow pitiless—
Proclaims, "He is not here."
But never hath the tenderness
Of night denied thee near.

Nay, within the twilight sympathy
Returning from afar,
She wakes again from memory
The dawn-extinguished star.

1907

MOON-SONG

Ave! 'Tis the maiden moon
To the westward wending,
There to sink, alas, too soon
With her star attending.
Doth he linger o'er her dreams
While her silvern taper teems?
Sleep their dusk-divided beams
One in beauty blending?

Vale! She hath drunken deep
Of a draught forbidden!
More than memory can weep
Hath the darkness chidden.
Sleepless Sorrow from the night
Drives her forth, a phantom white,
Withering beneath the blight
Of a wound heart hidden.

1902

NEIGHBOR

Full many a heedless fellow man
Had passed him on the way,
But Night, the Good Samaritan,
Beholding where he lay,
Upbore him to the Inn of Sleep,
And there I heard him say,
"Whate'er the charges of his keep,
O Landlord, I'll repay."

Sept. 1898

THE SEASONS

THE VOYAGERS

The spring in festival array,
From death to life, from night to day,

Came floating o'er the main;
And now with banners brave and bright,
From life to death, from day to night,
The autumn drifts again.

Sept. 1892

ANTICIPATION

The master scans the woven score
Of subtle harmonies before
A note is stirred;
And Nature now is pondering
The tidal symphony of Spring,
As yet unheard.

March, 1896

THE TRYST OF SPRING

Stern Winter sought the hand of Spring,
And, tempered to her milder mood,
Died leafless on the budding breast
He fondly wooed.

She wept for him her April tears,
But, from the shadows wandering soon,
Dreamed of a warmer love to come
With lordly June.

He scatters roses at her feet
And sunshine o'er her queenly brow,
And through the listening silence breathes
A bridal vow.

She answers not; but, like a mist
O'er-brimmed and tremulous with light,
In sudden tears she vanishes
Before his sight.

1897

ONE APRIL MORN

Twin violets amid the dew
Unfolded soft their petals blue
To find the winter's dream come true,
One April morn.

Two warmer, softer, violet eyes,
Beneath the selfsame April skies,
Fulfilled a dream of paradise,
One April morn.

Dawn-blossoms of a changeful day,
Ye would not till the twilight stay,
But ere the noontide sped away,
One April morn.

1897

INDIAN SUMMER

No more the battle or the chase
The phantom tribes pursue,
But each in its accustomed place
The Autumn hails anew:
And still from solemn councils set
On every hill and plain,
The smoke of many a calumet
Ascends to heaven again.

1897

INDIAN SUMMER

'Tis said, in death, upon the face
Of age, a momentary trace
Of infancy's returning grace
Forestalls decay;

And here, in Autumn's dusky reign,
A birth of blossom seems again
To flush the woodland's fading train
With dreams of May.

Oct. 1887

OCTOBER

Behold, the fleeting swallow
Forsakes the frosty air;

And leaves, alert to follow,
  Are falling everywhere,
Like wounded birds, too weak
A distant clime to seek.

And soon, with silent pinions,
  The fledglings of the north
From winter's wild dominions
  Shall drift affrighted forth,
And, phantom-like, anon
Pursue the phantoms gone.

Oct. 1895

AN AUTUMN LEAF

A nursling of the under-green,
A tethered wing I poised between
A heaven above and heaven below—
Twin sisters, mirrored in the glow
Of limpid waters—where the breeze,
Blind comrade of the listening trees,
Came wakening with soft caress
The shadows dumb and motionless.

There once, at summer's close, a flame
Of fire and song, a redbird came,
And, perched upon my parent limb,
Outpoured his soul. From joy abrim,

The bubbling vintage of his brain
I quaffed, the while each fibre-vein,
Deep-reddening with emotion, stirred.
Alas! he heeded not nor heard!
But when he ceased and flew away,
A panting prisoner I lay,
Close-fettered, till the kindred fire
Of frost lit up the autumn pyre;
Then, suddenly, the tidal swell
Of sap receded, and I fell.

Aug. 1894

MATER DOLOROSA

Again maternal Autumn grieves,
As blood-like drip the maple leaves
On Nature's Calvary,
And every sap-forsaken limb
Renews the mystery of Him
Who died upon a Tree.

April, 1896

TRIUMPH

Despite the north wind's boast,
Despite the muffled host
Of hushing snow,

There cometh from below
Out of the darkness wakened, one by one
The dreamers of the sun—
Not in the bleak array
Of winter, but with fragrant banners gay
Leaping the barriers strong
Of ice, and loosing song,
The prisoner, and letting go
Long-fettered laughter, as the shadowy foe
Shrinks from the echoing cry
Of "life and victory!"

April, 1905

MISCELLANEOUS

ECHOES

Where of old, responsive
As the wind and foam,
Rose the joyous echoes,
Desolate I roam,
Nor find one lingering sound to hail the wanderer home.

Silence, long unbroken,
Break thy rigid spell!
Free the fairy captives
Of the mountain dell,
If yet in veiling mist the mimic minions dwell.

Children of the distance,
Shall I call in vain?
From your slumbers waking,
Speak to me again
As erst in childhood woke your soft Æolian strain!

Hark! the wavy chorus,
Faint and far away,
Like a dream returning
In the light of day—
Too fond to flee; alas! too timorous to stay!

Hints of heavenly voices,
Tone for silvery tone,
Move in rarer measures
Than to us are known,
Still wooing hence to worlds beyond the shadowy zone.

Pausing, still they linger
As in love's delay,
With sibyllic omen
Seeming thus to say,
"Of all the vanished past, we Echoes only stay!"

1894

THE REAPER

Tell me whither, maiden June,
Down the dusky slope of noon

With thy sickle of a moon
Goest thou to reap.

"Fields of Fancy by the stream
Of night in silvery silence gleam,
To heap with many a harvest-dream
The granary of Sleep."

1894

THE BROOK

It is the mountain to the sea
That makes a messenger of me;
And, lest I loiter on the way
And lose what I am sent to say,
He sets his reverie to song
And bids me sing it all day long.
Farewell! for here the stream is slow,
And I have many a mile to go.

Feb. 1894

ECHO

O famished prodigal, in vain—
Thy portion spent—thou seek'st again
Thy father's door;
His all with latest sigh bequeathed

To thee the wanderer—he breathed,
Alas! no more.

Feb. 1897

THE SEED

Bearing a life unseen,
Thou lingerest between
A flower withdrawn,
And—what thou ne'er shalt see—
A blossom yet to be
When thou art gone.

Unto the feast of spring
Thy broken heart shall bring
What most it craved,
To find, like Magdalen
In tears, a life again
Love-lost—and saved!

March, 1895

THE SISTERS

The waves forever move;
The hills forever rest:
Yet each the heavens approve,

And love alike hath blessed
A Martha's household care,
A Mary's cloistered prayer.

1897

BREAD

Still surmounting as I came
Wind and water, frost and flame,
Night and day, the livelong year,
From the burial-place of seed,
From the earth's maternal bosom,
Through the root, and stem, and blossom,
To supply thy present need,
Have I journeyed here.

April, 1895

THE LONELY MOUNTAIN

One bird, that ever with the wakening spring
Was wont to sing,
I wait, through all my woodlands, far and near,
In vain to hear.

The voice of many waters, silent long,
Breaks forth in song;

Young breezes to the listening leaves outpour
Their heavenly lore;

A thousand other winged warblers sweet,
Returning, greet
Their fellows, and rebuild upon my breast
The wonted nest.

But unto me one fond familiar strain
Comes not again—
A breath whose faintest echo, farthest heard,
A mountain stirred.

1894

THE LAKE

I am a lonely woodland lake;
The trees that round me grow,
The glimpse of heaven above me, make
The sum of all I know.

The mirror of their dreams to be
Alike in shade and shine,
To clasp in love's captivity,
And keep them one—is mine.

Nov. 1892

NIAGARA

Where echo ne'er hath found
A footing on the steep,
Descends, without a sound,
The cataract of sleep.

Like swallows in the spray,
When evening is near,
The thronging thoughts of day
About the brink appear,

Till greets a heaven below
A sister heaven above,
Alike with stars aglow
Of unextinguished love.

Aug. 1895

RESIGNATION

Behold, in summer's parching thirst,
The while the waters pass them by,
The hills, like Tantalus accurst,
In silent anguish lie;
Nor look they to the lowly vale
Wherein their famished shadows glide,
But, with uplifted glances pale,
The will of heaven abide.

1897

PHANTOMS

Are ye the ghosts of fallen leaves,
O flakes of snow,
For which through naked trees the winds
A-mourning go?

Or are ye angels, bearing home
The host unseen
Of truant spirits, to be clad
Again in green?

1894

THE FIRST SNOW-FALL

The fir-tree felt it with a thrill
And murmur of content;
The last dead leaf its cable slipt
And from its moorings went;

The selfsame silent messenger
To one the shibboleth
Of life imparting, and to one
The countersign of death.

Jan. 1897

THE TWINS

Are you lost,
  Jack Frost?
    Ah, no;
For a time to and fro
    Must I go.
But a longer stay
Shall I make some day
When I come with my sister, the snow.

DECEMBER SNOW

This is the mystic scroll
Whereon a parting soul,
  The aged year,
His testament and will
Records: a secret till
  The spring appear.

Dec. 1894

TO A STAR

Am I the only child awake
  Beneath thy midnight beams?

If so, for gentle slumber's sake,
The brighter be their dreams!

But shouldst thou, travelling the deep,
The silent angel see
That puts the little ones to sleep,
Bright star, remember me.

June, 1900

THE STAR TO THE WATCHER

Farewell! I may not meet thee till the day
Hath passed away;
But in the bosom of the noontide sea
I'll dream of thee.

Alike are we the votaries of night;
A voice hath said,
"Let there for other worshippers be light,
For lovers, shade."

Nov. 1902

THE COCK

Before a clock was in the tower
Or e'er a watch was worn,

I knew of night the passing hour
And prophesied the morn;
To man of every age and clime
The oldest chronicler of time.

1902

IN AUTUMN

Now that the birds are gone
That sang the summer through,
And now that, one by one,
The leaves are going too,
Is all their beauty but a show
To fade forever when they go?

Nay, what is heard and seen,
In time must pass away;
But beauty, born within,
The blossom of a day,
Unto its hiding place again
Returns forever to remain.

Sept. 1904

THE ARCTIC

Is it a shroud or bridal veil
That hides it from our sight,

The lonely sepulchre of day
  Or banquet-hall of night?

Are those the lights of revelry
  That glimmer o'er the deep
Or flashes of a funeral pyre
  Above the corpse of sleep?

Beyond those peaks impregnable
  Of everlasting snow
One star, a steadfast beacon, burns
  To guard the coast below.

Whence come the ghostly galleons
  The pirate sun to brave
And furl the shadowy flag of death
  Above a warmer grave?

Jan. 1895

TO THE WHEATFIELD

Give *us this day our daily bread.*
"O wheat," the wind in passing said,
"'Tis you that answer everywhere
This call of life's incessant prayer;
Bow, then, in reverence your head,
For 'tis the Master's gift you bear."

March, 1906

SOIL-SONG

I give what ne'er was mine—
  To every seed the power
  Of stem and leaf and flower,
Of fruit or fragrance fine;

And take what others loathe—
  Of death the foulest forms,
  Wherewith to feed my worms,
And thus the world reclothe.

Sept. 1898

MEADOW-FROGS

Ere yet the earliest warbler wakes
  Of coming spring to tell,
From every marsh a chorus breaks—
  A choir invisible—
As though the blossoms underground
A breath of utterance had found.

Whence comes the liquid melody?
  The summer clouds can bring
No fresher music from the sky
  Than here the marshes sing.
Methinks the mists about to rise
Are chanting their rain prophecies.

May, 1898

HARE-BELLS

Ring! The little rabbits' eyes,
  In the morning clear,
Moisten to the melodies
  They alone can hear.

Ring! The little rabbits' feet,
  Shod with racing rhyme,
If the breezes they would beat,
  Must be beating time.

Ring! When summer days are o'er,
  And the snowfalls come,
Rabbits count the hours no more,
  For the bells are dumb.

1899

LIFE, DEATH, AND SIMILAR THEMES

LIFE

LIMITATION

Breathe above me or below,
Never canst thou farther go
Than the spirit's octave-span,
Harmonizing God and Man.

Thus within the iris-bound,
Light a prisoner is found;
Thus within my soul I see
Life in time's captivity.

Nov. 1893

EVICTED

Time shut the door and turned the key;
And here in darkness (woe is me!)
  I wait and call in vain:
  He will not come again!
I had but stepped beyond the light
And on the threshold of the night
  Turned back—alas, to find
  Life's portal closed behind!

Breathless, I beat the ponderous door.
No answer; Silence evermore,
  Remembering what has been,
  Sits desolate within.
The Present dead, Futurity,
Its still-born babe, wakes not for me:
  I am alone at last
  With the immortal Past.

July, 1893

GRIEF-SONG

New grief, new tears;
  Brief the reign of sorrow;
Clouds that gather with the night
  Scatter on the morrow.

Old grief, old tears;
  Come and gone together;
Not a fleck upon the sky
  Telling whence or whither.

Old grief, new tears;
  Deep to deep is calling:
Life is but a passing cloud
  Whence the rain is falling.

1894

TO AN OLD WASSAIL-CUP

Where Youth and Laughter lingered long
To quaff delight, with wanton song
  And warm caress,
Now Time and Silence strive amain
With lips unsatified to drain
  Life's emptiness!

1894

FOUNTAIN-HEADS

Alike from depths of joy and sorrow start
  The rain-drops of the heart;
Alike from sweet and briny waves arise
  The tear-drops of the skies.
And back to earth salt tears and freshening rain
  Alike must flow again.

Dec. 1893

THE BRIDGE

Where, as a lordly dream,
Glides the deep-winding stream
  For evermore;
Calm, as in conscious strength,
Bends thy majestic length
  From shore to shore.

Life, in its fevered heat,
Surges, with pulsing feet,
  Restless, above;
Doomed, in its anxious flow,
Like the strong tide below,
  Onward to move.

Strange is the motley throng!
Hearts yet untaught of wrong,
  Thoughtless of pain,
Mingle with souls accursed,
Sands in a desert thirst—
  Clouds without rain.

While o'er thee and below
Swift the twin currents flow,
  Thy form serene
Still as the shades that sleep
On the reflecting deep
  Arches between.

O that, all strife above,
Strong in the strength thereof
  Man evermore
Built with a broader span
Love for his fellow-man
  From shore to shore!

Dec. 1880

TRANSFIGURED

Throughout the livelong summer day
The leaf and twinborn shadow play
  Till leaf to shadow fade;
Then, hidden for a season brief,
They dream, till shadow turn to leaf
  As leaf was turned to shade.

Nov. 1893

WRECKED

Deep in the forest glades,
  Where leafy welcomes wooed our wandering way,
Once blent our shadows in the dallying shades
  That round us lay.

Thenceforth, of fate estranged,
  Each day beholds our widowed forms apart:
The word, the glance, the gesture, coldly changed,
  As heart to heart.

But cometh night to hide
  Life-wrecks, far drifted in the noonday sun,
And lo, our shadows in the sombre tide
  Again are one!

1897

THE LIFE-TIDE

Each wave that breaks upon the strand,
How swift soe'er to spurn the sand
And seek again the sea,
Christ-like, within its lifted hand
Must bear the stigma of the land
For all eternity.

Sept. 1892

LONE-LAND

Around us lies a world invisible,
With isles of dreams and many a continent
Of thought and isthmus fancy, where we dwell
Each as a lonely wanderer intent
Upon his vision, finding each his fears
And hopes encompassed by the tide of tears.

June, 1895

TO HER FIRST-BORN

Long I waited, wondering
How, so near my heart,
Love another life could bring,
Made of mine a part,
Nor let me, save in fancy, gaze
Soul-centered, on thy cloistered face!

But now, the mystery removed,
Thou liest on my breast,
A form so fervently beloved,
So tenderly caressed,
That as my spirit compassed thine,
Thy soul the limit seems of mine.

So, life that vanishes anon,
Perchance about us lies,
Too near for Love to look upon
With unanointed eyes,
Till, past the interval of pain,
We clasp the living form again.

1902

SICUT IN PRINCIPIO

A Pentecostal breath—
The wind that baffles death—
Moves; and from sterile sand
The sea brings forth the land,
Out of whose wounded side
All life is satisfied.

1910

OUTLINES

Oh, frame me in thy love, as I
The landscape in the branches low;

That none beneath the bending sky
Our sylvan secret know.

For 'tis of life the mystery
That, wheresoe'er its fibres run,
In time or in eternity,
The many shape the one.

Jan. 1902

BENIGHTED

Her mistress would not have her stay;
And so the fair hand-maiden, Day—
My Hagar—banished from my sight,
Has left me to her rival, Night.

But still she lingers in the glow
Of life above us and below:
The stars my Sarah's progeny;
My Hagar's, sands beside the sea.

1910

LIFE'S REPETEND

Do ye forget the blossom-time?
Or tint for tint, as rhyme for rhyme,
Would ye, O leaves, supply;

To prove, as echo to the ear,
That Near is Far and Far is Near
In circling home to die?

April, 1899

INFLUENCES

Each separate life is fed
From many a fountain-head;
Tides that we never know
Into our being flow,
And rays of the remotest star
Converge to make us what we are.

Dec. 1908

WAVES

We sighed of old till underneath His feet
Our pulses beat,
Again to sigh in restlessness until
He saith, "Be still."

And with us is the ever-moving wind,
And all mankind—
A triple chorus—each upheaving breast,
A sigh for rest.

March, 1909

SEEMING FAILURE

O wave upon the strand!
What urges thee in vain
To lift the baffled hand
In suppliance again?

"The passion that impels
The tidal energies
In every bud that swells,
In every soul that sighs:

"The same that on the cross
Sustained the dying Christ,
When Love for seeming loss
Alone was sacrificed."

May, 1903

THE ASTRONOMER

The little dome that holds the brain
Whereby he measures from afar,
The influence of steadfast star
Or moving moon and sun—
Both vaster mysteries contain
Than those he looks upon;
Nay, such the marvel that perchance
The spheres in mute amazement scan,

The while they meet his upward glance,
The deeper mind of man.

1923

THE VAMPIRE MOON

The vital vapors to absorb,
The moon, with famished gaze,
Suspends her lean, malignant orb
Above a dying face.

I watch her like a folded flower,
As silently expand
The pulses waving hour by hour
And heavier the hand,

Till she hath brimmed her cup; and I
An empty chalice hold;
My heart, in agony, as dry,
In wintriness as cold.

Feb. 1910

LIFE

Me, in the midst of dateless centuries,
By love concealed,

Now, newly swathed in mortal destinies,
Hath time revealed.

A breathing space, a silence, and behold
What I have been,
Unswathed, the circling centuries enfold,
Again unseen.

With days and nights brief fellowship was mine;
But unto thee
I come, a child inseparably thine,
Eternity.

1907

TO HER THREE DAYS' CHILD

I only, its mother, have known
The life that is taken away.
As the grape and the vine have we grown
Hour by hour, day by day,
Flesh of flesh, blood of blood, bone of bone.

As it was, evermore must it be,
O babe from thy mother removed;
As light unto shadow are we,
Each in the other approved,
Two in one, and in God one in three.

1906

AUGURY

Before the dawn, 'tis light,
  If hope the vigil keep;
Before the noontide, night,
  If Woe, despairing, weep:
The Future 'tis that shows
What now the present knows.

June, 1897

DEATH

NEKROS

Lo! all thy glory gone!
God's masterpiece undone!
The last created and the first to fall;
The noblest, frailest, godliest of all.

Death seems the conqueror now,
And yet his victor thou;
The fatal shaft, its venom quenched in thee,
A mortal raised to immortality.

Child of the humble sod,
Wed with the breath of God,
Descend! for with the lowest thou must lie—
Arise! thou hast inherited the sky.

1894

MY PHOTOGRAPH

My sister sunshine smiled on me
And of my visage wrought a shade.
"Behold," she cried, "the mystery
Of which thou art afraid!

"For Death is but a tenderness,
A shadow, that unclouded love
Hath fashioned in its own excess
Of radiance from above."

Oct. 1892

AWAKENING

Do they that sleep, O blossoms, yearn,
When ye from them to us return,
Again with you to rise?
Or do they in your quickening breath
Speak to us from the shades of death,
And see us with your eyes?

March, 1894

THE GOSSIP

So near me dwells my neighbor death
That e'en what silence pondereth

He catches word for word,
And promises some future day
To visit me upon his way,
And tell what he has heard.

Jan. 1896

THE TOLLMEN

Lo, Silence, Sleep, and Death
Await us on the way
To take of each the tribute breath
That God himself did pay.

Nor Solomon's as great,
Nor Cæsar's strong control,
As his who sits beside his gate
To take of each the toll.

April, 1896

CLEOPATRA TO THE ASP

"Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?"

Lie thou where life hath lain,
And let thy swifter pain
His rival prove;

Till, like the fertile Nile,
Death buries, mile for mile,
This waste of love.

Soft! Soft! A sweeter kiss
Than Antony's is this!
O regal shade,
Luxurious as sleep
Upon thy bosom deep
My heart is laid.

Oct. 1895

IN THE DEATH CHAMBER

Still upon the vacant wall
Doth the silver phantom fall,
Like a glory in the gloom
Of the long-deserted room.

Soul departed, can it be
Thou, death-laurelled majesty,
Mingling, in the moon's disguise,
With our midnight reveries?

July, 1892

THE DEPARTED

They cannot wholly pass away,
  How far soe'er above;
Nor we, the lingerers, wholly stay
  Apart from those we love:
For spirits in eternity,
  As shadows in the sun,
Reach backward into time, as we,
  Like lifted clouds, reach on.

Dec. 1893

LONELINESS

I walk beside a lonely lake
  Where, ere thy natal day,
I loved for contemplation's sake
  At eventide to stray.

The mist, rewakened from the wave,
  Enfolds me as before,
But from thy solitary grave
  Thou comest now no more.

1910

SPECTATORS

Around us, wheresoe'er we tread,
  The while our shadows pass them by,

As in Bethsaida's porch the dead
With upturned faces lie,
Dreading, perchance, the vanished light
And life's subsided fever-breath,
As we the charnel-house of night
Beyond the vale of death.

1894

FOILED

Ah, Death, thou art a lover,
And with thy rival Life
For proud possession of her
Didst wage perpetual strife.
Till Fate adjudged thee victory;
But Life's eternal spoil is she.

1902

ANIMULA VAGA

A spirit from the grave
Again I come,
E'en as I vanished, save
Disrobed and dumb.

No shadow as I pass—
However clear
The wave on mirroring glass—
Betrays me near;

Nor unto them that live
Forlorn of me,
A signal can I give
Of sympathy.

Ah, better 'twere to hide
Where none appear
Than thus in death abide
To life so near!

Aug. 1907

THE BIRTHDAY

Another blossom blooms for thee
Upon the never-failing Tree
Of Life—the same in breath and hue
As was the first that drank the dew,
When God within His garden stood
Alone and found it "very good."

So be it, when—thy garden done,
And all thy labors one by one
Recorded—through the twilight dim
He comes to bid thee walk with Him
Into a vaster solitude,
Thou too behold it very good!

1910

THE VIGIL

"Stay for me here!" Ah, well doth Love obey
Thy mandate; for the stars have burnt away
The web of darkness and disrobe the day
  In twilight chill.

"Stay for me here!" I cannot choose but wait.
The day is spent; and at the ponderous gate
Of sunset still I linger desolate.
  Was this thy will?

"Stay for me here!" An echo in the gloom
Of midnight warns me of approaching doom.
As at the temple, so before the tomb,
  I wait thee still.

Aug. 1905

THE FAGOT

If thou art fit to feed
  A dying flame,
Supply the present need;
  Be this thine aim,
And God, when sinks the light,
Will give thy soul good-night.

1902

HER PILOT

Death seemed afraid to wake her;
For, traversing the deep,
When home he came to take her,
He kept her fast asleep.

And, haply, from her dreaming
Of many a risk to run
She woke, with rapture beaming,
To find her voyage done.

Jan. 1909

DEATH

I passed him daily, but his eyes,
On others musing, missed me,
Till suddenly with pale surprise
He caught and clasped and kissed me.
Since then his long-averted glance
Is fixed upon my countenance.

1910

HEREDITY

I died at sea; and homeward bound,
I journey half the world around
To rest where native dust is found.

'Tis strange, if dust be dust, that I
E'en now to dust returning, sigh
As dust with kindred dust to lie.

But haply, as from sire to son,
From son to sire emotions run
That make the lineal current one.

1910

LOVE

THE RING

Hold the trinket near thine eye,
And it circles earth and sky;
Place it further, and behold!
But a finger's breadth of gold.

Thus our lives, beloved, lie
Ringed with love's fair boundary;
Place it further, and its sphere
Measures but a falling tear.

June, 1885

CONTENT

Were all the heavens an overladen bough
Of ripened benediction lowered above me,

What could I crave, soul-satisfied as now
That thou dost love me?

The door is shut. To each unsheltered blessing
Henceforth I say, "Depart! What would'st thou of me?"
Beggared I am of want, this boon possessing,
That thou dost love me.

1894

ROBIN

Come to me, Robin! The daylight is dying!
Come to me now!
Come, ere the cypress-tree over me sighing,
Dank with the shadow-tide, circle my brow;
Come, ere oblivion speed to me, flying
Swifter than thou!

Come to me, Robin! The far echoes waken
Cold to my cry!
Oh! with the swallow-wing, love overtaken,
Hence to the echo-land, homeward, to fly!
Thou art my life, Robin. Oh! love-forsaken,
How can I die?

1894

THE HALF-RING MOON

Over the sea, over the sea,
My love he is gone to a far countrie;
But he brake a golden ring with me
The pledge of his faith to be.

Over the sea, over the sea,
He comes no more from the far countrie;
But at night, where the new moon loved to be,
Hangs the half of a ring for me.

Feb. 1884

LOVE'S HYBLA

My thoughts fly to thee, as the bees
To find their favorite flower;
Then home, with honeyed memories
Of many a fragrant hour;

For with thee is the place apart
Where sunshine ever dwells,
The Hybla, whence my hoarding heart
Would fill its wintry cells.

Oct. 1892

AN INFLUENCE

I see thee—heaven's unclouded face
A vacancy around thee made,
Its sunshine a subservient grace
Thy lovelier light to shade.

I feel thee, as the billows feel
A river freshening the brine;
A life's libation poured to heal
The bitterness of mine.

Oct. 1889

COMPENSATION

How many an acorn falls to die
For one that makes a tree!
How many a heart must pass me by
For one that cleaves to me!

How many a suppliant wave of sound
Must still unheeded roll
For one low utterance that found
An echo in my soul!

Oct. 1892

AGAINST THE SKY

See, where the foliage fronts the sky,
How many a meaning we descry

That else had never to the eye
A signal shown!

So we, on life's horizon-line,
To watchers waiting for a sign,
Perchance interpret love's design,
To us unknown.

Jan. 1891

ILLUSION

As yonder circling heavens define
The limits of the sea,
And death on time's horizon-line
Shuts out eternity;
So, while in banishment apart
Our widowed lives appear,
Still holds each love-encompassed heart
The centre of the sphere.

Nov. 1892

THE SEA BUBBLE

Yea, a bubble though I be,
Love, O man, that fashioned thee
Of the dust created me

Not of earth, but of the sea:
Kindred blossoms then are we—
Time-blooms on eternity.

Dec. 1892

ALTER IDEM

'Tis what thou wast—*not* what thou art,
Which I no longer know—
That made thee sovereign of my heart,
And serves to keep thee so:

And couldst thou, coming to the throne,
Thy Self, *unaltered*, see,
Thou mightst the occupant disown
And scout his sovereignty.

Oct. 1895

ALL IN ALL

One heaven above;
But many a heaven below
The dewdrops show—
God's tenderness
Subdued in every teardrop to express
The whole of love.

April, 1895

SUSPENSE

Breathless as the blue above thee
Where a pausing vapor lies;
Here, the hearts on earth that love thee,
There, the souls in Paradise—
Host for host expectant of thee!
Who shall win the prize?

Sept. 1895

RETROSPECT

The heavens that seemed so far away
When old-time grief was near,
Beyond the vista seen to-day,
Close o'er my life appear;
For there, in reconcilement sweet,
The human and divine,
The loftiest and the lowliest, meet
On love's horizon-line.

July, 1891

BETRAYED

When first, a new-born babe, he smiled,
Ere yet a name was given,

We knew not if the stranger child
  Were more of earth or heaven.

His eyes, twin dewdrops, took the light
  Of noonday's perfect blue:
His cheeks, young apple-blossoms white,
  To warmer blushes grew.

His lips—a rosy oracle,
  And fragrant as a flower's—
Like breathing petals, seemed to tell
  Of sweeter thoughts than ours.

His name?—It is a balmy word
  Of sound and silence wove;
We caught it when an echo stirred
  In sleep and whispered—"Love."

Dec. 1892

LOVE IMMORTAL

The soul that sees no hell below,
  No heaven above,
All other mysteries may know,
  But never love.

If from the prison-walls of time
  No life may fly,

Then love and innocence and crime
Alike must die.

1910

MOMENTS

Like the manna, mute as snow,
Swift the moments come and go,
Each sufficient for the needs
Of the multitude it feeds;
One to all, and all to one,
Superfluity to none,
Ever dying but to give
Life whereon alone we live.

1910

A CARCANET

I give thee, love, a carcanet,
With all the rainbow splendor set,
Of diamonds that drink the sun,
Of emeralds that feed upon
His light as doth the evergreen,
A memory of spring between
This frost of whiter pearls than snow,
And warmth of violets below
A wreath of opalescent mist,

Where blooms the tender amethyst;
Here, too, the captives of the mine—
The sapphire and the ruby—shine,
Rekindling each a hidden spark,
Unquenched by buried ages dark,
Nor dimmed beneath the jeweled skies,
Save by the sunlight of thine eyes.

Oct. 1885

FROST

I left my window wide for love
To enter while I slept;
The moon, his homeward path above,
Her midnight vigil kept.

But suddenly, as o'er a glass.
A clouding vapor spread;
The heavens were cold; and love, alas!
Before the dawn was dead.

1902

TO AN AMATEUR

Love thy violin;
Let thy soul therein
Learn the unity
Of the mystic three,

When the string and bow—
Parted lovers—meet
And in music know
Life in love complete.

1902

AT THE EBB-TIDE

O marshes that remain
In anguish dumb
Till over you again
The waters come!

So must thy life abide
In silent pain,
Till love, the truant tide,
Come back again.

Feb. 1905

SUFFICIT

We are alone!
The night-winds moan
For envy, and the sobbing rain
Protests in vain.
How deep their darkness! But our night,

Than day more bright,
Needs not the glimmering orbs above,
But only love.

April, 1905

TRIBUTARIES

The little streams that onward flow
To mingle ere they meet the sea,
Know not that heaven hath willed it so
Till one their waters be.

And, from their fountain heads apart,
The lives that love hath led to me,
Till heart was wedded unto heart,
Knew not their destiny.

March, 1899

WAITING

I bide mine hour, when thou,
Beloved, far away,
As unto sleep shalt bow
Submissive to my sway.

The clouds that, floating, seem
  Unpiloted and free,
Obedient to the stream,
  Move onward to the sea;

And under love's control,
  Despite the opposing tide,
The current of thy soul
  Is setting to my side.

1902

AN INTERPRETER

What, O Eternity,
  Is time to thee?
What to the boundless All
  My portion small?

Lift up thine eyes, my soul!
Against the tidal roll
  Stands many a stone,
  Whereon the breakers thrown
Are dashed to spray;
  Else were the ocean dumb.

So, in the way
  Of tides eternal, thou
  Abidest now;

And God himself doth come
A suppliant to thee,
Love's prisoned thought to free.

1902

A SUNSET SONG

Fade not yet, O summer day,
For my love hath answered yea,
Keep us from the coming night,
Lest our blossom suffer blight.

Fear thou not; if love be true,
Closer will it cleave to you.
'Tis the darkened hours that prove
Faith or faithlessness in love.

May, 1908

THE TEST

The dead there are, who live;
The living, who are dead;
The poor, who still can give;
The rich, who lack for bread;
To love it is and love alone
That life or luxury is known.

May, 1904

AT THE LAST

Little squirrel in the tree,
  Faithless other friends to me,
Therefore to the birds and thee
  Have I come.

Men have reason; ye have love—
  Gift all other gifts above—
Proving what, alas, to prove
  They are dumb.

1910

JOY AND SORROW

HAZARD

One step 'twixt loss and gain!
The summit to attain
So near the brink of pain
  Hath joy to go—

So steep the precipice,
So frail the footing is,
'Twere death to panting bliss
  To look below.

Aug. 1895

JOY

New-born, how long to stay?
The while a dewdrop may
  Or rainbow-gleam:
One kiss of sun or shade,
And lo, the breath that made
  Unmakes the dream!

1894

THE PLAYMATES

Who are thy playmates, boy?
"My favorite is Joy,
Who brings with him his sister, Peace, to stay
The livelong day.
I love them both; but he
Is most to me."

And where thy playmates now,
O man of sober brow?
"Alas! dear Joy, the merriest, is dead.
But I have wed
Peace; and our babe, a boy,
New-born, is Joy."

1894

PAIN

I am a gardener to weed
  And dig about the heart;

To plant therein the pregnant seed,
And watch, with many a smart,
The stem and leaf and blossom rise,
Alternate to supply
The victims for the sacrifice,
And, for the fruit, to die.

Jan. 1895

RELEASED

Go, bird, and to the sky
Pour forth what thou and I
Have suffered here:
Thou, for thy mate removed,
And I, for faith disproved
In one as dear.

Farewell; and if again
Thou find for prison-pain
Felicity,
Be this thy glad release
A prophecy of peace,
Dear bird, for me!

1897

MY PORTION

I know not what a day may bring;
For now 'tis sorrow that I sing,

And now 'tis joy.
In both a father's hand I see;
For one renews the man in me,
And one the boy.

Sept. 1909

BEREFT

As when her calf is taken, far and near
The restless mother roves,
So now my heart lows, wandering everywhere,
To wake the voice it loves.
O Distance, are the echoes backward thrown
In mockery of pain?
Or doth remembered anguish of thine own
Bring them to birth again?

1902

REVISITED

A lonely road I tread again,
As once with Love's companion, Pain,
Who faltered, "Love is fled."

To-day, a shadow not mine own
Along a lonelier path is thrown,
That tells me "Pain is dead."

1910

SYMPATHY

ENSHRINED

Come quickly in and close the door,
For none hath entered here before
The secret chamber set apart
Within the cloister of the heart.

Tread softly! 'tis the holy place
Where memory meets face to face
A sacred sorrow, felt of yore,
But sleeping now forevermore.

It cannot die; for nought of pain,
Its fleeting vesture, doth remain.
Behold upon the shrouded eye
The seal of immortality!

Love would not wake it, nor efface
Of anguish one abiding trace,
Since e'en the calm of heaven were less,
Untouched of human tenderness.

1894

HELPMATES

Says the Land, "O sister Sea,
Had'st thou not borne the voyagers to me,

Vain were their visions grand,
And I, e'en now, perchance, a stranger-land;
So, thine the glory be!"

Says the Sea, "Nay, brother Land,
Had'st thou not outward stretched the saving hand,
My bosom now had kept
The secret where the souls heroic slept;
'Tis in they strength they stand!"

Nov. 1892

TO MY SHADOW

Friend forever in the light
Cleaving to my side,
Harbinger of endless night
That must soon betide;

"Hither," seemest thou to say,
"From the twilight now;
In the darkness when I stay,
Never thence wilt thou."

Sept. 1893

THE CHORD

In this narrow cloister bound
Dwells a sisterhood of sound,

Far from alien voices rude
As in secret solitude.
Unisons, that yearned apart,
Here, in harmony of heart,
Blend divided sympathies,
And in choral strength arise,
Like the cloven tongues of fire,
One in heavenly desire.

1894

SYMPATHY

Lo! of gladness or regret
Teardrops in the violet
Weeping till her leaves are wet
Dewdrops in mine eyes beget!

Mirrored in each lucid sphere,
Highest heaven to earth is near;
Closer sympathies are here
'Twixt the dewdrop and the tear.

April, 1894

UNHEEDED

Ye heavens so cold and clear
Above me weeping here,
Where every blossom sheds a tear

My grief to see;
No wonder, free from stain,
Untroubled ye remain;
The vapors gendering the rain
Are all with me!

Dec. 1895

STRANGERS

Ye hills that sloping westward see
Alone the evening sky,
I come to you for sympathy.
"Alas!" they made reply,
"Your tears are for the morning bright
That never here hath been.
We lie in shadow when the light
Upon her face is seen."

Dec. 1901

DESERT-ORBS

The world, they tell us, dwindles
When matched with other spheres;
And yet in all their amplitudes
No place for human tears.

How sterile is the sunshine,
  How masculine the blue,
That breeds no shadow, nor betrays
  A memory of dew!

Sept. 1897

MY CAPTIVE

I brought a blossom home with me
  Beneath my roof to stay;
But timorous and frail was she,
  And died before the day:
She missed the measureless expanse
Of heaven, and heaven her countenance.

Aug. 1902

ISOLATION

Far off a solitary Peak
  The restless Waves behold.
"Thou hast attained the heaven we seek;
  Oh, teach us, self-controlled,
Thy constancy!" Alas, how bleak
  The mountain top and cold!

1902

IN TOUCH

How slight soe'er the motion be,
With palpitating hand
The gentlest breaker of the sea
Betrays it to the land.

And though a vaster mystery
Hath set our souls apart,
Each wafture from eternity
Reveals thee to my heart.

April, 1909

MEMORY

INTIMATIONS

I knew the flowers had dreamed of you
And hailed the morning with regret,
For all their faces with the dew
Of vanished joy were wet.

I knew the winds had passed your way,
Though not a sound the truth betrayed;
About their pinions all the day
A summer fragrance stayed.

And so, awaking or asleep,
A memory of lost delight

By day the sightless breezes keep
And silent flowers by night.

May, 1891

WAYFARERS

O comrade Sun, that day by day
Dost weave a shadow on my way,
Lest in the luxury of light
My soul forget the neighboring night
Wilt thou whene'er, my journey done,
Thou wanderest our path upon,
Bear in thy beams a memory
Of one who walked the world with thee,
Or mourn amid the lavishness
Of life one hovering shade the less?

April, 1894

THE PEAK

As on some solitary height
Abides, in summer's fierce despite,
Snow-blossom that no sun can blight,
No frost can kill;
So, in my soul—all else below
To change succumbing—stands aglow

One wreath of immemorial snow,
Unscattered still.

Jan. 1892

ADIEU

God speed thee, setting Sun!
Thy beams for me have spun
Of light to-day
A memory that one
Alone could bring and none
Can take away.

1897

HARBORS

Full many a noonday nook I know
Where memory is fain to go
And wait in silence till the shade
Of sleep the solitude invade.

For these the resting-places are
Of dreams that, journeying afar,
Pause in their migratory flight
This side the continent of night.

Feb. 1903

SURVIVAL

The tempest past—
A home in ruin laid;
But lo! where last
The little children played
At hide-and-seek,
A footprint small
Pleads silently,
As if afraid to speak.
"Behold in me
A memory,
The least and last of all!"

Nov. 1909

MEMORY

I go not to the grave to weep,
But to my heart, wherein I keep
A hidden manna that hath fed
Alike the living and the dead.

We gathered it as, day by day,
It fell from heaven upon our way,
To be, if haply one were gone,
The bread for both to feed upon.

1910

WITHDRAWN

I miss thee everywhere.
  The places dear to thee,
Familiar shadows wear
  Henceforth for memory.

And where thou hast not been,
  Thou seemest to repose
As near, though never seen,
  As fragrance to the rose.

Dec. 1906

THE STROKE OF THE HOUR

If I were dead, and yonder chime
Retold the fairy-tale of time,
At distance I perchance might hear,
And half in pity, half in fear,
Perceive the future life to be
But an immortal memory.

1910

THE WORLD

EVOLUTION

Out of the dusk a shadow,
  Then a spark;

Out of the cloud a silence,
Then a lark;

Out of the heart a rapture,
Then a pain;
Out of the dead, cold ashes,
Life again.

1894

VISIBLE SOUND

Aye, have we not felt it and known,
Ere science proclaimed it her own,
That form is but visible tone?

Behold, where in silence was drowned
The last fleeting echo of sound,
The rainbow—its blossom—is found;

While anon, with a verdurous sweep
From the mountain-side, wooded and steep,
Swells the chorus of deep unto deep,

That the trumpet flowers, flame-flashing, blow
Till the lilies enkindled below
Swoon pale into passion, like snow!

Yea, Love, of sweet Nature the Lord,
Hath fashioned each manifold chord
To utter His visible Word,

Whose work, wheresoever begun,
Like the rays floating back to the sun,
In the soul of all beauty is one.

1894

RESURRECTION

All that springeth from the sod
Tendeth upwards unto God;
All that cometh from the skies
Urging it anon to rise.

Winter's life-delaying breath
Leaveneth the lump of death,
Till the frailest fettered bloom
Moves the earth and bursts the tomb.

Welcome, then, time's threshing-pain
And the furrows where each grain,
Like a Samson, blossom-shorn,
Waits the resurrection morn.

March, 1894

EARTH'S TRIBUTE

First the grain and then the blade—
The one destroyed, the other made;

Then stalk and blossom, and again
The gold of newly minted grain.

So life, by death the reaper cast
To earth, again shall arise at last;
For 'tis the service of the sod
To render God the things of God.

April, 1892

ANONYMOUS

Anonymous—nor needs a name
To tell the secret whence the flame,
With light and warmth and incense, came
A new creation to proclaim.

So was it when, His labor done,
God saw His work and smiled thereon:
His glory in the picture shone,
But name upon the canvas none.

1897

THE SOUL'S QUEST

I laid my vesture by
Upon this spot,
And here returning, I
Behold it not.

Dost thou, O earth, resume
The relics of the tomb?

Whereto the earth replies:
"Be not afraid;
Safe in my keeping lies
What here was laid:
A thousand forms refine
What shall again be thine."

Oct. 1896

THE BUBBLE

A momentary miracle,
Wherein Eternal Light,
A child among his children still,
Forgets the infinite,
Among His toys to multiply
The larger bubble of the sky.

Oct. 1891

DUST TO DUST

"In the centre of each snow-crystal or drop of rain is found a minute particle of dust."

Earth wedded, life atwain
In heaven, were endless pain.

Uplifted from the plain
To realms of snow or rain,
Of dust each lonely grain
To dust will come again.

1902

ANIMULA VAGA

Do quickly what thou hast to do;
For, till to dust again,
O coffin-worm, the temple fall,
A fledgling I remain.

Nay, till the utmost particle
Another form hath found,
Though plumed for the empyrean,
I flutter near the ground.

1910

SLEEP

SLEEP

Blind art thou as thy mother Night,
And as thy sister Silence dumb;
But naught of soothing sound or sight
Doth unto mortals come

So tender as thy fancied glance
And dream-imagined utterance.

Feb. 1893

MIDNIGHT

A flood of darkness overwhelms the land;
And all that God had planned,
Of loveliness beneath the noonday skies,
A dream o'ershadowed lies.

Amid the universal darkness deep
Only the Isles of Sleep,
As did the dwellings of the Israelite
In Egypt, stem the night.

Aug. 1894

SLUMBER-SONG

Sleep! the spirits that attend
On thy waking hours are fled.
Heaven thou canst not now offend
Till thy slumber-plumes are shed;

Consciousness alone doth lend
Life its pain, and death its dread;

Innocence and peace befriend
All the sleeping and the dead.

Sept. 1895

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

The sculptor in the marble found
Her hidden from the world around,
As in a donjon keep;
With gentle hand he took away
The coverlet that o'er her lay,
But left her fast asleep.

And still she slumbers; e'en as he
Who saw in far futurity
What now before us lies—
The fairest vision that the stream
Of night, subsiding, leaves agleam
Beneath the noonday skies.

1897

ASLEEP

Nay, wake him not!
Unfelt our presence near,
Nor falls a whisper on his dreaming ear:

He sees but sleep's celestial visions clear,
All else forgot.

And who shall say
That in life's waking dream
There be not ever near us those we deem
(As now our faces to the sleeper seem)
Far, far away?

July, 1881

NIGHTFALL

Now, weary, one by one we lay
Aside the panoply of day;
And, like to little children, creep
Defenceless, to the arms of sleep.

Our heads upon her bosom, soon
Forgotten are the cares of noon,
That, shorn of shadows, helpless lie
As Samson in captivity.

Dec. 1906

DEPRECATION

Low, I listen in my grave
For the silence soon to be

When a slow-receding wave,
Hushed, is memory.

Now the falling of a tear
Or the breathing half-suppressed
Or a sigh, re-echoed here,
Holds me from my rest.

O ye breakers of the past
From the never-resting deep,
On the coast of slumber cast,
Cease, and let me sleep.

April, 1907

BARGAINS

"What have you in your basket?"
I questioned Mother Sleep.
"Ah, many a golden casket
Of jewel-dreams I keep
At pastime prices for the friend
Who has half-an-hour or more to spend."

1902

A HIDING-PLACE

Where lies the lidded sleep
Throughout the waking hours?

Bee-like, in the honeyed deep
  Of her favorite flowers,
Where the drowsy drops distil
Dreams, the coming night to fill,
  Or, to soothe the weary brain,
  Sweet forgetfulness of pain.

1902

THE VOYAGER

Far inland, where the sea,
  Throughout the day,
Lives but in memory—
  From twilight gray
As foamless tides of sleep
  Their heights attain—
Back to the distant deep
  I drift again;

And, as of old, a boy
  Seem I to be,
With innocence and joy
  Afloat with me,
Till, all too soon, the star
  Of morn appears,
And on the slumber-bar
  We part in tears.

1910

POETRY

NARCISSUS

The god enamoured never knew
The shadow that beguiled his view,
Nor deemed it less divinely true
  Than life and love.

And so the poet, while he wrought
His image in the tide of thought,
Deemed it a glimpse in darkness caught
  Of light above.

1894

IN SOLITUDE

Like as a brook that all night long
Sings, as at noon, a bubble-song
  To sleep's unheeding ear,
The poet to himself must sing
When none but God is listening
  The lullaby to hear.

March, 1896.

HIDDEN

The sweetest warblers—one in light,
And one in darkness, screened from sight—

By voice alone prevail;
So let the poet sing his song,
As far secluded from the throng
As lark or nightingale.

1910

SILENCE

THE STATUE

First fashioned in the artist's brain,
It stood as in the marble vein,
Revealed to him alone;
Nor could he from its native night
Have led it to the living light,
Save through the lifeless stone.

E'en so, of silence and of sound
A twin-born mystery is found,
Like as of death and birth;
Without the pause we had not heard
The harmony, nor caught the word
That heaven reveals to earth.

May, 1893

PILGRIMS

Unto the fane of silence come,
Love-led from alien lands,

Pale pilgrim prayers with upward glance
And falling tears and lifted hands,
And lips with stanched emotion dumb,
To ask for utterance.

There, shadow-like, with folded wings,
In reverence apart,
They wait till lingering time hath brought,
In words or music to the heart,
What spring to wintry nature brings—
Release for prisoned thought.

Sept. 1892

CONSIDER THE LILIES

'Tis not the radiant star above
That breathes for me the lore of love
As doth the dewy censer sweet
That heaven enkindles at my feet.

Yea, more for me of tenderness
Is uttered in the mute caress
Upon these moistened petals found
Than e'er was wedded unto sound.

May, 1894

ECHO

Ah, whither hath it flown?
  Alas, the strain
To memory alone
  Shall live again!

Silence, wherever be
  Its place of rest,
Keep thou for love and me
  A neighboring nest.

Feb. 1897

THE SHELL

Silence—a deeper sea—
Now sunders thee
Save from the primal tone—
Thy mother's moan.

Within her waves, hadst thou
No voice as now;
A life of exile long
Hath taught thee song.

Oct. 1902

TO SILENCE

Why the warning finger-tip
Pressed forever on thy lip?
"To remind the pilgrim Sound
That it moves on holy ground,
In a breathing-space to be
Hushed for all eternity."

1902

O'ERCOME

I pause for tears. But thou, my lute,
Why art thou, like thy master, mute?
Hath harmony within thee bred
The hope thou hast interpreted?

Nay, if thou falter, Love may deem
Our passion but an idle dream.
Speak then, my lute, that all may hear
How silence holds me prisoner.

1910

CHILDHOOD

CHILDHOOD

Old Sorrow I shall meet again,
And Joy, perchance—but never, never,

Happy Childhood, shall we twain
See each other's face forever!

And yet I would not call thee back,
Dear Childhood, lest the sight of me,
Thine old companion, on the rack
Of Age, should sadden even thee.

1894

A CRADLE-SONG

Sing it, Mother! sing it low;
Deem it not an idle lay.
In the heart 'twill ebb and flow
All the life-long way.

Sing it, Mother! softly sing,
While he slumbers on thy knee;
All that after-years may bring
Shall flow back to thee.

Sing it, Mother, love is strong!
When the tears of manhood fall,
Echoes of thy cradle-song
Shall its peace recall.

Sing it, Mother! when his ear
Catcheth first the Voice Divine,
Dying, he may smile to hear
What he deemeth thine.

1894

CONFIDED

Another lamb, O Lamb of God, behold,
Within this quiet fold,
Among Thy Father's sheep
I lay to sleep!
A heart that never for a night did rest
Beyond its mother's breast.
Lord, keep it close to Thee,
Lest waking it should bleat and pine for me!

1892

BABY

Baby in her slumber smiling
Doth a captive take;
Whispers Love, "From dreams beguiling
May she never wake!"

When the lids, like mist retreating,
Flee the azure deep,
Wakes a newborn Joy, repeating,
"May she never sleep!"

1894

BABY'S DIMPLES

Love goes playing hide-and-seek
'Mid the roses on her cheek,

With a little imp of Laughter,
Who, the while he follows after,
Leaves the footprints that we trace
All about the Kissing-place.

1894

A BUNCH OF ROSES

A rosy mouth and rosy toe
  Of little baby brother
Until about a month ago
  Had never met each other;
But nowadays the neighbors sweet,
  In every sort of weather,
Half way with rosy fingers meet
  To kiss and play together.

1894

THE NEW-YEAR BABE

Two together, Babe and Year,
  At the midnight chime,
Through the darkness drifted here
  To the coast of Time.

Two together, Babe and Year,
  Over night and day

Crossed the desert Winter drear
To the land of May.

On together, Babe and Year,
Swift to Summer passed;
"Rest a moment, Brother dear,"
Said the Babe at last.

"Nay, but onward," answered Year;
"We must farther go:
Through the Vale of Autumn sere
To the Mount of Snow."

Toiling upward, Babe and Year
Climbed the frozen height.
"We may rest together here,
Brother Babe—Good night!"

Then together Babe and Year
Slept; but ere the dawn,
Vanishing, I know not where,
Brother Year was gone!

1894

TO A BLIND BABE, SLEEPING

Are thy dreams dark? or is the light
Alone denied thy waking sight,
While softer stars their vigils keep
Within thy hemisphere of sleep?

Yea: haply, as noon-blinded beams
Awake in darkness, o'er thy dreams
The pity that begets our tears,
A kindling radiance appears.

"CHANTICLEER"

A crowing, cuddling little Babe was he,
A child for little children far or near.
When he stood and crowed upon his mother's knee,
The morning echoed, "Welcome, Chanticleer!"
He was a crowing, cuddling little Babe!

When his mother wore, alas, her life away,
He was wonder wide to see the children weep;
But he crowed and cuddled close enough to lay
His head upon her heart and went to sleep.
He was a cuddling, crowing little Babe!

God himself was tender to him; for, behold,
An Angel in a dream (the children said)
Came and kissed him till his little cheek was cold;
So he never saw the tears the Twilight shed.
He was a crowing, cuddling little Babe!

1902

BREAKERS

'Tis well the dimples sweet
To kiss away,

The marks of little feet
That love the spray;

For, once the children gone,
'Twere mockery
The vestiges upon
The sand to see.

1910

SLUMBER-SONG

Lo, in the west
A cloud at rest—
A babe upon its mother's breast—
Is sleeping now.

Above it beams
A star that seems
To shed the light of holy dreams
Upon its brow.

But cloud and star,
Though nearer far
They seem, my Babe, more distant are
From heaven than thou.

1899

AN IDOLATOR

The Baby has no skies
But Mother's eyes,
  Nor any God above
  But Mother's Love.
His angel sees the Father's face,
But *he* the Mother's, full of grace;
And yet the heavenly kingdom is
  Of such as this.

Sept. 1899

MISSING

Thou that didst leave the ninety and the nine
  To seek the one,
Behold, among the many that are mine,
  A lamb is gone.

The one perchance the worthiest to be,
  Dear Lord, with Thee;
And so the saddest for the Mother's heart
  With him to part.

O Thou, Thyself a mourning Mother's Son,
  Fold close my little one!

1907

MISCELLANEOUS

IMMORTALITY

E'en now the spirit moves
  In visions yet to be,
Whereof the present proves
  A dream and prophecy.
For still, the shadows gone,
  With light forever new,
Behold, another dawn
  Proclaims the promise true.

1897

AT THE YEAR'S END

Night dreams of day, and winter seems
In sleep to breathe the balm of May.
Their dreams are true anon; but they,
The dreamers, then, alas, are dreams.
Thus, while our days the dreams renew
Of some forgotten sleeper, we,
The dreamers of futurity,
Shall vanish when our own are true.

1894

THE BIRTH OF A WORLD

A hidden world,
Unwombing, hurled

From dark to light.
And to the skies
Its wondering eyes
The livelong night
Doth Science turn, with sighs
When shadows take their flight.

Another birth—
A soul to earth
But newly come!
Its destiny
Eternity.
With wonder dumb
The heavens look down to see
Our faces turned therefrom.

1902

THE RIVER

How far soe'er thy restless waters roll,
Thou hast attained the sea.
So haply, now the current of the soul
Hath touched eternity.

For backward to the fountain-head there flows
A breath of tides to be—
Of life beyond, wherein the present knows
E'en now its destiny.

Sept. 1897

IMMORTELLES

"They toil not, neither do they spin"—
The blossom-thoughts that here within
The garden of my soul arise;
Alike unheeding wintry skies,
Or sun or rain, or night or day,
And never hence to pass away.

July, 1894

INSPIRATION

No hint upon the hilltop shows
  The flush of climbing feet;
But where the heaven above it glows
  Triumphal glances meet,
Anon to vanish in the plain
And leave the hill its heaven again.

No sign celestial hath the soul
  Its coming dreams to tell,
Unheralded the tidal roll
  Returns—a rhythmic swell,
Anon with silence, as with sand,
To strew the surf-forsaken strand.

Aug. 1895

CLIFFS

Forever face to face,
As towered of old
Within the Holy Place
The wings of gold.

One heralding the day
With kindled crest;
One reddened with the ray
That fires the west.

The bosom-vale between
Alike their own;
To each a heaven unseen,
A world unknown.

March, 1907

OUR FIRST-BORN

It died so young! and yet,
Of all that vanished hence,
Is none to lingering regret
So lost as Innocence:

For wheresoe'er we go,
Whatever else remain,

That Favorite of Heaven, we know,
We shall not find again.

Jan. 1905

THE OLD YEAR'S BLESSING

Like Simeon of old,
The new-born babe I hold
Upon my heart:
According to thy word,
Let now thy servant, Lord,
In peace depart.

1910

TO A PHOTOGRAPH

O tender shade!
Lone captive of enamoured light,
That from an angel visage bright
A glance betrayed.

Dost thou not sigh
To wander from thy prison-place?
To seek again the vanished face
Or else to die?

A shade like thee,
Dim Eidolon—a dream disproved—

A memory of light removed,
Behold in me!

1894

FROM PARADISE

All else that in the limit lies
Of fleeting time I see;
The glance, Beloved, of thine eyes
Alone is lost to me.

And in the selfsame interval,
The ever-changing place
Of light's horizon-line is all
That meets thy lonely gaze.

Behold the glimmer of a tear,
The twinkle of a star—
The shadow and the light how near!
And yet, alas, how far!

1897

ECLIPSE

Fear not; the planet that bedims
The moon's distorted face,

Itself through cloudless ether swims
The Sea of Space;

And earthward many a distant wing
Of spirits in the light
A salutary shade may fling
To mark its flight.

Oct. 1899

THE GRAVE-DIGGER

Here underneath the sod,
Where night till now hath been,
With every lifted clod
I let the sunshine in.

How dark soe'er the gloom
Of death's approaching shade,
The first within the tomb
Is light, that cannot fade.

And from the deepest grave
I banish it in vain;
For, like a tidal wave,
Anon 'twill come again.

March, 1907

THE LUTE-PLAYER

He touched the strings; and lo, the strain,
As waters dimple to the rain,
Spontaneous rose and fell again.

In swaddling clothes of silence bound,
His genius a soul had found,
And wakened it to light and sound.

July, 1907

INITIATED

Thou hast put on the livery,
And learned the shibboleth,
And pledged for all eternity
The brotherhood of death.

Yet to thy wonder-wakened eyes
The light, however clear,
But solves the deeper mysteries
That lay about thee here.

Aug. 1906

RELIGION

CHRIST

THE HOUSEHOLDERS

One plucked the grape and trod the wine,
And headlong rushed the sotted swine
  To perish in the sea.
One blessed the cup and poured the blood,
And lo! about His banquet stood
  The brides of chastity.

Aug. 1895

SPECULUM AMORIS

My God the Baby is
  That rests upon my knee.
Into those eyes of His
  I gaze mine own to see.
And He looks up to meet in mine
Reflected all the love Divine.

A Maid my mother is,
  And I a sireless Son.
No other deed like this
  Has Love eternal done—

To make here motherhood for Me
The mirror of Divinity.

1910

CHRIST TO DUMB CREATURES

For man or for your fellows die,
Ye bleeding victims, e'en as I.
The life they spare not freely give
That in Me all again may live.
The lamb, the fish, I fed upon
With my humanity are one.

1910

CHRIST TO THE VICTIM-TREE

Soon, but not alone to die,
  Kinsman tree,
Limbed and lifeless must thou lie,
  Doomed, alas, for Me;
Yea, for Me, as I for all,
Must thou first a victim fall.

Thou for me the bitter fruit
  Loth to bear,
Must of death's accursed root

Shame reluctant share.
Thus the Father's will divine
Seals thy fate to compass Mine.

Dec. 1893

CHRIST AND THE PAGAN

I had no God but these,
The sacerdotal trees,
And they uplifted me.
"I hung upon a Tree."

The sun and moon I saw,
And reverential awe
Subdued me day and night.
"I am the perfect Light."

Within a lifeless stone—
All other gods unknown—
I sought Divinity.
"The Corner-Stone am I."

For sacrificial feast
I slaughtered man and beast,
Red recompense to gain.
"So I, a Lamb, was slain.

"Yea, such My hungering Grace
That whereso'er My face

Is hidden, none may grope
Beyond eternal Hope."

1910

CHRIST AND THE WINDS

From Bethlehem to Calvary,
By night and day, by land and sea,
His closest followers were we.

We soothed Him on His mother's breast;
We shared with John the place of rest;
With Magdalen His feet we pressed.

We saw His twilight agony;
To us He breathed His latest sigh;
With us He sought again the sky.

And now of all to whom His tone
His face and gesture once were known,
We, wanderers, remain alone.

1910

VOX DEI

"Some said it thundered."

The Father speaking to the Son,
In all the multitude was none
That caught the meaning true.

And yet "This word from Heaven," said He,
"Was spoken not because of me—
But came because of you."

Thus through the Son of Man alone
The mysteries of God are known;
Thus to the chosen few
With eye and ear attentive found
He speaks in every sight and sound,
The old becoming new.

1909

THE IMAGE-MAKER

"Thou shalt no graven image make;"
And yet, O sculptor, for the sake
Of such an effigy as I—
The superscription like the face
Disfigured now, and hard to trace—
Didst thou thyself consent to die.

Jan. 1909

CHRISTMAS

THE CHRIST CHILD TO THE CHRISTMAS LAMB

O little lamb,
Behold I am

So weak and small
That even thou
Canst pity now
The God of all.

1902

AT THE MANGER

When first her Christmas watch to keep
Came down the silent angel, Sleep,
With snowy sandals shod,
Beholding what His mother's hands
Had wrought, with softer swaddling-bands
She swathed the Son of God.

Then, skilled in mysteries of night,
With tender visions of delight
She wreathed His resting place,
Till wakened by a warmer glow
Than heaven itself had yet to show,
He saw His mother's face.

Dec. 1907

PRISONER'S BASE

Though Almighty, far from me,
Little Babe, you cannot be;
If perchance you get away,

Back you come on Christmas-day,
And we children hold you here
In our hearts, a prisoner.

1910

THE ARGONAUTS

To Bethlehem, to Bethlehem,
The Magi move, and we with them,
  Along the selfsame road;
Still following the star of Peace,
To find at last the Golden Fleece,
  The spotless Lamb of God.

Dec. 1901

THE FORFEITURE

Who first beneath the mistletoe
  On Christmas night is found,
Must pay a forfeiture, we know,
  To them that stand around.
Approach, ye angel choirs, and then
Make way for happier sons of men.

1910

CHRISTMAS EVE: SUNSET

Once more upon the western skies
  The flaming sword appears,
And Eve again from paradise
  Departs in twilight tears.

A backward look, a memory
  O'ershadowing afar
A promise, of her progeny
  The sole remaining star;

And dreams that waken in the gloom
  The glory of a morn
When, mothered in a maiden's womb,
  The Son of God is born.

1902

CHRISTMAS GREETING

Good morning, Lord! For little boys
The Day more generous to joys
  Than unto men, they say;
If so, for greater happiness
Teach us Thy holy name to bless
  With fuller hearts than they.

Dec. 1906

THE BREEZE AT BETHLEHEM

I that have lashed the sea
And from the forest torn the rooted tree,
Come now, my passion spent,
A lowly penitent,
Sweet Child, to Thee.

Alike Thy sovereign will
The strong and weak, O slumbering Babe, fulfil.
As I before Thee now,
Shall waves submissive bow
And storms be still.

1910

CHRISTMAS

The world His cradle is;
The stars His worshippers;
His "place on earth," the mother's kiss
On lips new pressed to hers.

For she alone to Him
In perfect light appears,
The one horizon never dim
With penitential tears.

Dec. 1905

A CHRISTMAS CRADLE

Let my heart the cradle be
Of Thy bleak Nativity!
Tossed by wintry tempests wild,
If it rock Thee, Holy Child,
Then, as grows the outer din,
Greater peace shall reign within.

1902

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

'Tis Christmas night! Again—
But not from heaven to earth—
Rings forth the old refrain
"A Saviour's Birth!"

Nay, listen, 'tis below!
A song that soars above
From human hearts aglow
With heavenly love!

1897

THE ANGEL'S CHRISTMAS QUEST

"Where have ye laid my Lord?
Behold, I find Him not!
Hath He, in heaven adored,

His home forgot?
Give me, O sons of men,
My truant God again!"

"A voice from sphere to sphere—
A faltering murmur—ran,
'Behold, He is not here!
Perchance with Man,
The lowlier made than we,
He hides His Majesty.'"

Then, hushed in wondering awe,
The spirit held his breath
And bowed; for, lo, he saw
O'ershadowing Death,
A Mother's hand above,
Swathing the limbs of Love!

June, 1894

THE LIGHT OF BETHLEHEM

'Tis Christmas night! the snow,
A flock unnumbered lies;
The old Judean stars aglow
Keep watch within the skies.

An icy stillness holds
The pulses of the night;

A deeper mystery infolds
The wondering Hosts of Light.

Till, lo, with reverence pale
That dims each diadem,
The lordliest, earthward bending, hail
The Light of Bethlehem!

1894

AT BETHLEHEM

I

The Child

Long, long before the Babe could speak,
When he would kiss his mother's cheek
And to her bosom press,
The brightest angels, standing near,
Would turn away to hide a tear,
For they are motherless.

II

Where were ye, Birds, that bless His name,
When wingless to the world He came,
And *wordless*—though Himself the Word
That made the blossom and the bird?

III

To His Mother

He brought a Lily white,
That bowed its fragrant head
And blushed a rosy red
Before her fairer light.

He brought a Rose; and lo,
The crimson blossom saw
Her beauty; and in awe
Became as white as snow.

1899

OUT OF BOUNDS

A little Boy of heavenly birth,
  But far from home to-day,
Comes down to find His ball, the earth,
  That sin has cast away.
O comrades, let us one and all
Join in to get Him back His ball!

1894

THE LAMB-CHILD

When Christ the Babe was born,
  Full many a little lamb

Upon the wintry hills forlorn
Was nestled near its dam;

And, waking or asleep,
Upon His mother's breast,
For love of her, each mother-sheep
And baby-lamb He blessed.

1897

A CHRISTMAS CHIME

At Christmas time from clime to clime
Each star to star doth sweetly chime,
Till all the heavens are ringed with rhyme.

Then loosed above, a note thereof
Floats downward like a wandering dove,
And all the world is ringed with Love!

1899

THE BLESSED VIRGIN

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

A dewdrop of the darkness born,
Wherein no shadow lies;
The blossom of a barren thorn,
Whereof no petal dies;

A rainbow beauty passion-free,
Wherewith was veiled Divinity.

Jan. 1894

THE ANNUNCIATION

"Fiat!"—The flaming word
Flashed, as the brooding bird
Uttered the doom far heard
Of death and night.

"Fiat!"—A cloistered womb—
A sealed, untainted tomb—
Wakes to the birth and bloom
Of life and light.

March, 1893

DE PROFUNDIS

I heed it all; no more
Than to my listening heart,
Were millions on the shore,
Couldst thou, O Sea, impart.

So, long in silence sealed,
The Word Ineffable

To Mary's heart revealed
E'en all that God could tell.

April, 1896

A LILY OF THE FIELD

In all his glory, Solomon
Was never so arrayed;
Yet far more beautiful is one—
A MOTHER and a MAID—
Whose loveliness and lowliness
God stooped from highest heaven to bless.

1899

THE BABE TO THE GIFT-BEARER

I cannot hold within My hands
Thy gift, but here My mother stands
To take it as My own.
It is through her I come to thee,
And now our go-between is she
Till I am older grown.

1910

THE ASSUMPTION

Behold! the mother bird
The Fledgling's voice hath heard!
He calls anew,
"It was thy breast
That warmed the nest
From whence I flew.
Upon a loftier tree
Of life I wait for thee;
Rise, mother-dove, and come;
Thy Fledgling calls thee home!"

1902

STABAT MATER

In the shadow of the rood,
Broken-hearted there she stood
Near her Son and Lord;
While her soul, His doom lamenting,
Yet in sacrifice consenting,
Felt the cleaving sword.

Thou alone no ransom needing,
Let thy Son, the Victim bleeding,
For my sin atone;
What for me, my God and Brother

Deigns to bear, O sinless Mother,
Lean not thou alone.

To the lash, for sin atoning,
Lo, He bows! and thou, O moaning
Mother, now must see
Limb from limb His spirit languish,
And His latest looks of anguish,
Turned in love to thee!

Came there ever to another
Grief like thine, O wounded Mother,
As thou lookest upon
Him, the Son of God, all holy,
And of thee, a virgin lowly,
Sole-begotten Son?

Who so lost to human feeling
As to hide his tears revealing
Sympathy with thine?
Who that e'er was born of woman,
In a tenderness so human,
Sees not love divine?

Let me near the fountain growing
Of thy tenderness o'erflowing,
Drink my fill thereof;
Let the fervid flames illuming
All thy soul, a fire consuming,
Kindle mine to love.

One with thee, my vigil keeping;
One with thee, the mourner, weeping
Near His sacred side,
Where thy soil in desolation
Waits of woe the consummation,
Let my soul abide.

Virgin, earth's divinest blossom,
Spurn not from thy fragrant bosom
Dews that fall for thee!
Make me, near thy Son remaining,
Simon-like, His cross sustaining
One in sympathy!

Let me from His life-distilling
Wounds, mine empty chalice filling,
Quaff the crimson wine;
Let the flames, devouring, end me,
In thy chastity defend me
From the wrath divine.

Lord, through her who brought Thee hither,
Let me, hence departing whither
Thou the way hast found,
Come through Death's opposing portal
To the Victor's palm immortal,
With Thy glory crowned.

March, 1910

AN OCTAVE TO MARY

THE ANNUNCIATION

Ah! naught in Heaven, Divinity beneath,
So pure as is this lily-gleam of earth
Whereat the highest angel holds his breath,
In telling of a God's incarnate birth.

Then, if I render love
Through her, Thou must approve
The tribute paid;
For 'tis Thy Holy Face,
Not Caesar's, that I trace
In hers portrayed.

1893

MARY

Maid-Mother of humanity divine,
Alone Thou art in thy supremacy,
Since God Himself did reverence to thee
And built of flesh a temple one with thine,
Wherein, through all eternity, to shrine
His inexpressive glory. Blessed be
The miracle of thy maternity,
Of grace the sole immaculate design!

1893

MARY, THE SINNER

Mary—'tis a tender plea;
Love is strong as infamy;
In the shadow of thy shame
Reverencing His Mother's name,
Lo! He pardons thee!

1893

CHRIST THE MENDICANT

A stranger, to His own
He came; and one alone,
  Who knew not sin,
His lowliness believed,
And in her soul conceived
  To let Him in.

He naked was, and she
Of her humanity
  A garment wove.
He hungered; and she gave,
What most His heart did crave,
  A Mother's love.

1893

CHILD AND MOTHER

Look on Thy Mother's face,
That miracle of grace,
  O Son Divine!
That, bending, she may see
A greater mystery
  Revealed in Thine.

Without Thee, she had been
Nor Mother Blessed nor Queen;
  Nor wouldest Thou,
Her lowliness apart,
Have borne the Human Heart
  Thou bearest now.

Lo! earth and heaven—the footstool and the throne
  Of Him who bowed obedient to thy sway,
What time in lowly Nazareth, unknown,
  He led of life the long-sequestered way—
Pause, till their tongues are tutored of thine own,
  "Magnificat" in wondering love to say.

1893

THE DEBTOR CHRIST

What, woman, is my debt to thee
  That I should not deny

The boon thou dost demand of me?
"I gave thee power to die."

1893

THE PURIFICATION

Where, woman, is thine offering,
The debt of law and love?
"My Babe a tender nestling is,
And I, the mother-dove."

THE TREE

Thou art the blessed Tree
Whose fruit proclaimeth thee,
O Mother mine!
For never laden bough
Such burden bore as thou,
Of Love Divine.

1893

SAINTS

MAGDALEN

(*After Swinburne.*)

"She hath done what she could."
It was thus that He spake of her,

Trembling and pale as the penitent stood.
"And this she hath done shall be told for the sake of her,
Told as embalmed in the gift that I take of her,
Take, as an earnest of all that she would
Who hath done what she could.

"She hath done what she could";
Lo, the flame that hath driven her
Downward, is quenched! and her grief like a flood
In the strength of a rain-swollen torrent hath shriven her.
Much hath she loved and much is forgiven her;
Love in the longing fulfils what it would—
"She hath done what she could."

1894

ST. AFRA TO THE FLAMES

Here, on the prey of passion, famished Flames,
Feed here! Spare not your victim. Torture tames
The wanton flesh rebellious. Let the heat
Of these your fierce caresses free the feet
And loose the fettered pinions of desire.
Delay not! Leap the barriers and fire
The citadel, the heart. A flame is there
To which your kiss is coldness. Clothe me fair,
O Christ, with purple penance. Crown me queen

Of agonies that cleave all mists between
My God and me! Life's vintage drop by drop
Fast fills the destined measure of my cup.
Quaff, Lord, my potion! Pledge me, and thy breath
Shall sweeten all the bitterness of death.

1902

THE GOOD THIEF

If thou, like Zacheus, wouldst see
Thy Lord and Master, climb the tree,
And for His passing wait with me.

Here, nearer to its native skies,
No intervening darkness lies
Between the soul and Paradise.

Was ever mortal penance brief
As mine? A moment of belief—
Turnkey of Heaven, beware—a thief!

1910

ST. MARY OF EGYPT

Strong to suffer, strong to sin,
Loving much, and much forgiven,
In the desert realm a queen,
Penance-crowned, to cope with Heaven,

Solitude alone could be
Room enough for God and thee.

Long the vigil, stern the fast;
  Morn, with night's anointing, chill;
Noon with passion overcast;
  Night with phantoms fouler still;
Prayer and penitential tears
Battling with the lust of years.

Low upon the parching sand,
  Shrivelled in the blight of day,
As beneath a throbbing brand
  Prone thy ghastly shadow lay,
Till the manacles of hell
From thy fevered spirit fell.

Then, O queen of solitude!
  Silence led thee as a bride,
Clothed anew in maidenhood,
  To an altar purified,
Lit with holy fires, to prove
Self the sacrifice of love.

1882

THE OLD PASTOR

How long, O Lord, to wait
Beside this open gate?

My sheep with many a lamb
Have entered, and I am
Alone, and it is late.

1902

BROTHER ASS AND ST. FRANCIS

It came to pass
That "Brother Ass"
(As he his Body named,)
Unto the Saint
Thus made complaint:
"I am unjustly blamed.

"Whate'er I do,
Like Balaam you
Requite me with a blow,
As for offence
To recompense
An ignominious foe.

"God made us one,
And I have done
No wickedness alone;
Nor can I do
Apart, as you,
An evil all my own.

"If Passion stir,
'Tis you that spur
My frenzy to the goal;
Then be the blame
Where sits the shame,
Upon the goading soul.

"Should one or both
Be blind or loth
Our brotherhood to see,
Remember this,
You needs must miss
Or enter heaven through *me*."

To this complaint
The lowly saint
In tears replied, "Alas,
If so it be,
God punish me
And bless thee, Brother Ass."

Dec. 1906

DOCTRINE

GOD

I see Thee in the distant blue;
But in the violet's dell of dew,
Behold, I *breathe* and *touch* Thee too.

March, 1895

DEUS ABSCONDITUS

My God has hid Himself from me
Behind whatever else I see;
Myself—the nearest mystery—
As far beyond my grasp as He.

And yet, in darkest night, I know,
While lives a doubt-discerning glow,
That larger lights above it throw
These shadows in the vale below.

Sept. 1892–Feb. 1896

THE GOOD SEED

The Magi came to Bethlehem,
The House of Bread, and following them,
  As they the Star, I too am led
  To Christ, the living House of Bread.

A pilgrim from the hour of birth,
The night-cold bosom of the earth
  I traversed, heavenward journeying,
  A hidden prophecy of Spring
My only guide, a lifted blade
My only weapon, till the Shade,
  The latest to withstand me, lay
  Death-smitten at the door of Day.

O Light! O heavenly Warmth! to you
My cup-bearers, I quaffed the dew,
  The pledge and sacramental sign
  Of Life that mingling first with mine,
A sap-like inspiration, ran
To mingle with the life of man.

As leaped the Infant in the womb
At Mary's voice, e'en so to bloom
  And ripeness, while the reapers sang,
  My soul—their songs inspiring—sprang
To meet the scythe, the flail, the stone
Of sacrifice, whereby alone,
  Through waves of palpitating flame,
  The Bread upon the altar came.

And here, O mystery of Love,
Behold, from highest heaven above,
  Through *Me*, the Son of God again,
  A victim for the sons of men!

Nov. 1895

CHARITY

If but the world would give to love
The crumbs that from its table fall,
'Twere bounty large enough for all
The famishing to feed thereof.

And love, that still the laurel wins
Of sacrifice, would lovelier grow,
And round the world a mantle throw
To hide its multitude of sins.

Nov. 1892

ALL IN ALL

We know Thee, each in part—
  A portion small;
But love Thee, as Thou art—
  The All in all:
For Reason and the rays thereof
Are starlight to the noon of Love.

Dec. 1897

CONSCIENCE

I am that Tamerlane,
  The Scourge of God;
With me alone remain
  The sword and rod
Wherewith in wrath throughout His world-domain,
Doth Love, avenging, reign.

I am that Joseph bound
  And sold in vain;

From dungeon darkness found
To rise again;
At God's right hand, whate'er of good redound,
His sole vicegerent crowned.

July, 1902

A HAIRBREADTH

'Tis in the twinkle of escape
That all our safety lies.
Of danger, whatsoe'er the shape,
The nearness naught implies:
This side is life; that side, a breath
Of deviation, instant death.

'Tis in the *present* I am free
The mental die to cast;
The future yet of mastery
Is palsied as the past;
Between, the breathless balance still
Awaits the hesitating will.

April, 1900

FAITH

In every seed to breathe the flower,
In every drop of dew

To reverence a cloistered star
Within the distant blue;
To wait the promise of the bow,
Despite the cloud between,
Is Faith—the fervid evidence
Of loveliness unseen.

Aug. 1895

TRANSFIGURATION

The cloud unto its parent stream
That rushes to the sea
Reveals a far-reflected dream
Of heaven's tranquillity;
And unto faith's adoring sight
A mystery appears,—
A cloud transfigured of the light
In every tide of tears.

April, 1896

THE LIFE-GIVER

The earth to us her bread
Of life doth give;
And we to her, our dead,
That they may live.

In vain the vision blest
Of Heaven were found,
Did faith no ladder rest
Upon the ground.

Nov. 1904

EPIPHANY

Reason, have done!
Of thee I'll none
While face to face I see the sun.

Be thine the ray
To point the way
In darkness: but, behold, 'tis day.

Should faith divine
Forbear to shine,
Again I'll place my hand in thine.

For in thy sight
To walk aright
Is prelude to the perfect light.

1910

BEATITUDE

And is it well with thee?
Aye, past all dreaming, well!

For here we dwell
Where none may weep,
And Paradise is ours again to keep,
The tree of knowledge in the midst thereof.
Time-ripened love—
The leaves no more for healing, but for food
Of life renewed,
Fresh with the dew, from vanished faith distilled,
Of hope fulfilled.
All round us angels be
To guard the gateways, not with sword of flame,
But fragrant breathings of the holy Name,
That never more an after-thought of sin
May enter in.

Dec. 1903

MY OFFERING

He asked me bread, the bread whereby alone
The beggar Love could live;
I gave a *stone*.
He asked me fish, and I, a Passion's slave
(All that I had to give),
A *serpent* gave.
Then came his benediction; "Lo, in Me,
A *Stone* retributive,
A *Serpent*, see!"

Sept. 1894

LENT AND EASTER

A LENTEN THOUGHT

Alone with Thee, who canst not be alone,
  At midnight, in Thine everlasting day;
Lo, less than naught, of nothingness undone,
  I, prayerless, pray!

Behold—and with Thy bitterness make sweet,
  What sweetest is in bitterness to hide—
Like Magdalen, I grovel at Thy feet
  In lowly pride.

Smite, till my wounds beneath Thy scourging cease;
  Soothe, till my heart in agony hath bled;
Nor rest my soul with enmity at peace,
  Till death be dead.

1894

ON CALVARY

In the shadow of the rood
Love and Shame together stood;
Love, that bade Him bear the blame
Of her fallen sister Shame;
Shame, that by the pangs thereof
Bade Him break His heart for Love.

April, 1895

THE VIGIL OF GOOD FRIDAY

What of the Night? 'Tis dark;
The fatal word
Awakes the warning bird;
For hark
(O Christ, is Faith forgot?)
"I know Him not!"

What of the night? 'Tis cold;
But throngs accurst
Deep-gorge their crimson thirst.
O Christ, again forsworn,
Is *Hope* forlorn?

What of the night? 'Tis dead!
The darker day
Approaching, terror-gray
She fled.
O Christ! its perjury
Love weeps for Thee.

1902

RECOGNITION

When Christ went up to Calvary,
His crown upon His head,
Each tree unto its fellow-tree
In awful silence said:

"Behold the Gardener is He
Of Eden and Gethsemane!"

April, 1901

HOLY SATURDAY

O Earth, who daily kissed His feet
Like lowly Magdalen, how sweet
(As oft His mother used) to keep
The silent watches of His sleep,
Till love demands the prisoner,
And Death replies, "He is not here.
He passed my portal, where, afraid,
My footsteps faltered to invade
The region that beyond me lies;
Then, ere the dawn, I saw Him rise
In glory that dispelled my gloom
And made a temple of the tomb."

March, 1904

HOLY SATURDAY

I came, O Death, to conquer thee,
And overcome the Grave;
But thou wast tenderer to me
Than those I sought to save.

Henceforth in benediction be,
And teach mankind thy charity.

April, 1901

THE RECOMPENSE

She brake the box, and all the house was filled
With waftures from the fragrant store thereof,
While at His feet a costlier vase distilled
The bruised balm of penitential love.

And, lo, as if in recompense of her,
Bewildered in the lingering shades of night,
He breaks anon the sealed sepulchre,
And fills the world with rapture and with light.

March, 1891

RABBONI

"I bring Thee balm, and lo, Thou art not here!
Twice have I poured mine ointment on Thy brow
And washed Thy feet with tears. Disdain'st Thou now
The spikenard and the myrrh?

Has Death, alas, betrayed Thee with a kiss
That seals Thee from the memory of mine?"

"Mary!" It is the selfsame voice divine.
"Rabboni!"—only this.

1894

EASTER EVE

Lo, now His deadliest foes prevail!
And where His bleeding footsteps fail,
Like wolves upon a victim's trail,
They gloat, in purple mockery, "Hail!"

O cloud! O regal vesture torn!
O shadow on the shoulders borne!
O diadem!—one starry thorn
Shall blossom into Easter morn!

Dec. 1892

EASTER LAMBS

Ours is the echoed cry
Of helpless Innocents about to die.
Remembering them
In Ramah, for the Lamb of Bethlehem
Untimely slain,
We, when the paschal sacrifice is nigh,
Lament again.

1902

MISCELLANEOUS

AD BESTIAS

Ye have the power to lift us higher.
The Prodigal among the swine
Refound the pearl cast forth in mire,
The wisdom lost in wine.

And he, the outcast of the East,
The lord of luxury, discrowned,
Again the dawn of reason found
In darkness of the beast.

Aye, when a babe He laid Him down
Among the beasts in Bethlehem,
Of brutal power He gave to them
To forge the martyr's crown.

1910

THE BURTHEN OF THE ASS

On Christmas night at Bethlehem
When shepherds came, I watched with them
The Mother and the Child,
Who, warned from Herod's wrath to flee,
Were into Egypt borne by me
Beyond the desert wild.

And back again at Herod's death
I brought them home to Nazareth;
And when unto His own
With loud Hosannas to His Name
As King the Son of David came,
My shoulders were His throne.

1902

THE CONQUEROR

He cloistered here a virgin thought—
His vow of chastity,
Whereto from year to year he brought
First-fruit of victory.
And here, his latest battle won
Beneath her panoply,
In death returns the champion
Within her walls to lie.

1902

THE SONG OF THE MAN

"The woman gave, and I did eat."
Whereof gave she?
"'Twas of the garden fruitage sweet—
A portion fair to see;
She plucked and ate, and I did eat,

And lost alike are we;
God saith,
Ye die the death!

"The woman gave, and I did eat."
Whereof gave she?
"'Twas of her womb a burden sweet—
But sad, alas, to see;
She took and ate, and I did eat,
And saved alike are we;
God saith,
So dieth death!"

1897

BETTER

Better for sin to dwell from heaven apart
In foulest night
Than on its lidless eyeballs feel the dart
Of torturing light.
Better to pine in floods of sulphurous fire
Than far above
Behold the bliss of satisfied desire,
Nor taste thereof.
Yea, love is lord, e'en where the powers of pain
Undying dwell;
Defiled, in spotless glory to remain
Were deeper hell.

Sept. 1892

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

First Spirit
I am this moment freed from earth.
Second Spirit
And I am a captive bound to birth.
Who art thou?

First Spirit
Flesh and blood to be
Cleave not closer unto thee.
Second Spirit
My father?
First Spirit
Yea.

A mingling breath
They drew. Then rival Life and Death
As if rebuking Love's delay
Drove each his fate-determined way.

1902

BETHEL

A rugged stone
For centuries neglected and alone,
Its destiny unknown.

The tides of Light
Sped o'er it, and the breakers of the night,
In alternating flight.

And it was wet
With twilight dew, the sacramental sweat
That mystic dreams beget.

Here Jacob lay
And saw the midnight vision drift away
Before the darker day.

Upon the sod
A pillow; and then, by countless angels trod,
A stepping-stone to God.

Nov. 1899

PURIFICATION

From flame to snow—
E'en so
Must all perfection flow.
Each pure desire
Is fledged with fire
And needs must grow
From dark to light,
Till, passion past,
Transfigured in its flight,

It stand at last
Unblushing on the topmost height
With sister souls in white,
To follow still the Lamb
Wherever He may go.

A LITTLE CHILD'S PRAYER

I

Make me, dear Lord, polite and kind
To every one, I pray;
And may I ask you how you find
Yourself, dear Lord, to-day?

II

Lord, I have lost a toy
With which I love to play;
And as you were yourself a boy
Of just my age to-day,
O Son of Mary, would you mind
To help me now my toy to find?

1899

THE CHILD ON CALVARY

The Cross is tall,
And I too small

To reach His hand
Or touch His feet;
But on the sand
His footprints I have found,
And it is sweet
To kiss the holy ground.

1899

THE CHILD

At Nazareth

I

Once, measuring His height, He stood
Beneath a cypress-tree,
And, leaning back against the wood,
Stretched wide His arms for me;
Whereat a brooding mother-dove
Fled fluttering from her nest above.

II

At evening He loved to walk
Among the shadowy hills, and talk
Of Bethlehem;
But if perchance there passed us by
The paschal lambs, He'd look at them
In silence, long and tenderly;
And when again He'd try to speak,
I've seen the tears upon His cheek.

1899

HIMSELF AND OTHERS

WESTWARD

And dost thou lead him hence with thee,
  O setting sun,
And leave the shadows all to me
  When he is gone?
Ah, if my grief his guerdon be,
  My dark his light,
I count each loss felicity
  And bless the night.

Aug. 1890

THE STRANGER

He entered, but the mask he wore
Concealed his face from me.
Still, something I had seen before
  He brought to memory.

"Who art thou? What thy rank, thy name?"
I questioned, with surprise.
"Thyself," the laughing answer came,
  "As seen of others' eyes."

1894

AUTUMN SONG

My life is but a leaf upon the tree—
A growth upon the stem that feedeth all.
A touch of frost—and suddenly I fall,
To follow where my sister-blossoms be.

The selfsame sun, the shadow, and the rain,
That brought the budding verdure to the bough,
Shall strip the fading foliage as now
And leave the limb in nakedness again.

My life is but a leaf upon the tree;
The winds of birth and death upon it blow;
But whence it came and whither it shall go,
Is mystery of mysteries to me.

July, 1892

FRATERNITY

I know not but in every leaf
  That sprang to life along with me
Were written all the joy and grief
  Thenceforth my fate to be.

The wind that whispered to the earth,
  The bird that sang its earliest lay,

The flower that blossomed at my birth—
My kinsmen all were they.

Aye, but for fellowship with these
I had not been—nay, might not be;
Nor they but vagrant melodies
Till harmonized to me.

Feb. 1893

MY MESSMATE

Why fear thee, brother Death,
That sharest, breath by breath,
This brimming life of mine?
Each draught that I resign
Into thy chalice flows.
Comrades of old are we;
All that the Present knows
Is but a shade of me:
My *Self* to thee alone
And to the Past is known.

Sept. 1894

INSOMNIA

E'en this, Lord, didst thou bless—
This pain of sleeplessness—

The livelong night,
Urging God's gentlest angel from thy side,
That anguish only might with thee abide
Until the light.
Yea, e'en the last and best,
Thy victory and rest,
Came thus to thee;
For 'twas while others calmly slept around,
That thou alone in sleeplessness wast found
To comfort me.

Oct. 1891

SELECTION

Among the trees, O God,
Is there not one
That with unrivalled love
Thou look'st upon?

And of all blessed birds,
Hath not thy love
Found for its fittest mate
The homing dove?

Or, 'mid the flame of flowers
That light the land,
Doth not the lily first
Before thee stand?

So says my soul, O God,
The type of thee:
"In each life-circle, *one*
Was made for me."

1897

COMMUNION

Once when my heart was passion-free
To learn of things divine,
The soul of nature suddenly
Outpoured itself in mine.

I held the secrets of the deep
And of the heavens above;
I knew the harmonies of sleep,
The mysteries of love.

And for a moment's interval
The earth, the sky, the sea—
My soul encompassed, each and all,
As now they compass me.

To one in all, to all in one—
Since love the work began—
Life's ever-widening circles run,
Revealing God and man.

Sept. 1892

THE PILGRIM

When, but a child, I wandered hence,
Another child—sweet Innocence,
  My sister—went with me;
But I have lost her, and am fain
To seek her in the home again
  Where we were wont to be.

1897

RECOGNITION

At twilight on the open sea
We passed with breath of melody—
A song, to each familiar, sung
In accents of an alien tongue.

We could not see each other's face,
Nor through the growing darkness trace
Our destinies; but brimming eyes
Betrayed unworded sympathies.

1894

THE YOUNG TENOR

I woke; the harbored melody
  Had crossed the slumber bar,
And out upon the open sea

Of consciousness afar
Swept onward with a fainter strain,
As echoing the dream again.

So soft the silver sound and clear
Outpoured upon the night,
That silence seemed a listener
O'erleaning with delight
The slender moon, a finger-tip
Upon the portal of her lip.

Nov. 1896

OFF SAN SALVADOR

It lay to westward—as of old,
An emerald bar across the gold
Of sunset—whence a vision grand
First beckoned to the stranger-land.

And on our deck, uncoffined, lay
A child, whose spirit far away
The wafture of an angel hand
Late welcomed to a stranger-land.

July, 1884

THE LOST ANCHOR

Ah, sweet it was to feel the strain,
What time, unseen, the ship above

Stood steadfast to the storm that strove
To rend our kindred cords atwain!

To feel, as feel the roots that grow
In darkness, when the stately tree
Resists the tempests, that in me
High hope was planted far below!

But now, as when a mother's breast
Misses the babe, my prisoned power
Deep-yearning, heart-like, hour by hour,
Unquiet aches in cankering rest.

1897

OUTSPEEDED

To-night the onward-rushing train
Would bear thee far from me;
But, winged with swifter dreams, again
My spirit flies to thee.

Nay, speeding far beyond thee, waits
To welcome thee anew,
Where dawn is opening the gates
To let the darkness through.

Jan. 1895

FINIS

O to be with thee sinking to thy rest,
Thy journey done;
The world thou leavest blessing thee and blest,
O setting sun;
The clouds, that ne'er the morning joys forget,
Again, aglow,
And leaf and flower with tears of twilight wet
To see thee go.

1910

OUR STARS

My twilight is before the dark,
And thine before the day;
O'er both alike a beacon-spark
To keep us in the way.
The darkness can but brighten mine;
Let not the noon extinguish thine.

1910

CONSOLATION

Henceforth alone to bear
The cross thou canst not share
Is sweet to me;

For 'twas the heavier part
That lay upon thy heart
Which now is free.

1910

IN EXTREMIS

Lord, as from Thy body bleeding,
Wave by wave is life receding
From these limbs of mine:
As it drifts away from me
To the everlasting sea,
Blend it, Lord, with Thine.

1907

ASPIRATION

I envy not the sun
His lavish light;
But oh, to be the one
Pale orb of night,
In silence and alone
Communing with mine own!

I envy not the rain
That freshens all

The parching hill and plain;
But oh, the small
Night-dewdrop now to be,
My noonday flower, for thee!

Sept. 1900

SUNDERED

Thou sleepest sound, and I
Anear thee lie,
Yet worlds apart:
Thou in the light of dreams;
I, where the midnight seems—
An ashen sea—
From this my world and that wherein thou art
To blot out all but me.

March, 1908

IMPORT

Thou hast the final touch supplied
That till thy coming was denied—
A single letter in a word
Whose absence all the context blurred;
A missing note that, but for thee,
Had marred the perfect harmony.

Oct. 1909

CONSUMMATION

The interval
We both recall,
To each was all.

A moment's space,
That time nor place
Can e'er efface.

'Tis all our own,
A secret known
To us alone:

My life to thee
As thine to me,
Eternity.

1902

CONSECRATION

The Twilight to my Star,
  Her hoary head
A Hope receding far,
  To Life re-led.

Apart and poor I lay;
  My fevered frame

Slow withering away,
When soft she came,

From comfort, to my care;
And Pity sweet
Subdued her, kneeling there,
To kiss my feet.

A Magdalen adored
Her God in Thee:—
A greater love, O Lord,
Anointed me.

1902

NOCHE TRISTE

The night that bore me to my dead,
Along the dreary way
The meadow-frogs in chorus said,
"We sing the vanished day;
Think not that life is all with you:
Her night hath stars and voices too."

1910

INVOCATION

Come, gentle Sleep!
Unchiding mother of a wayward son;

Come, and mine eyelids steep,
For day is done,
And night's cold shadow steals my lonely soul upon.

Come, Queen of Peace!
And seal me with thy benediction now;
Come, and from care release
The throbbing brow,
And to thy sceptered calm each stern emotion bow.

Bring with thee dreams,
Responsive visions of the day gone by,
Still as in quiet streams
The pictured sky,
That with a soothing charm allures the pensive eye.

Thou art of Love
A tender token to each erring child,
Sent, as the holy dove
O'er waters wild;
The one remaining joy of Eden undefiled.

As pilgrims, we,
Thy children, weary of the shifting scene,
Turn for repose to thee;
Thy brow serene
No frown repulsive clouds, the yearning heart to wean.

When life is spent.
And Death, thy brother, claimeth as his own
All that thy favor lent,

Then for thy son
Plead that he kindly deal as thou hast ever done.

1882

MY ANGEL

O little child, that once was I
And still in part must be,
When other children pass me by,
Again thy face I see.

Where art thou? Can the innocence
That here no more remains,
Forget, though early banished hence,
What memory retains?

Alas! and could'st thou look upon
The features that were thine,
To see of tender graces none
Abiding now in mine,

Thy heart compassionate would plead,
And, haply, not in vain,
As Angel Guardian, home to lead
The wanderer again.

Oct. 1905

GOOD NIGHT!

Good night, dear Lord! and now
  Let them that loved to keep
Thy little bed in Bethlehem,
  Be near me while I sleep;
For I—more helpless, Lord—of them
  Have greater need than Thou.

1907

AVE ATQUE VALE

Where wast thou, little song,
That hast delayed so long
  To come to me?
"Mute in the mind of God,
Till where thy feet had trod,
  I followed thee."

Farewell! I go my way;
And if in long delay
  Thou must remain,
Forget not, 'tis the track
We trod that leads us back
  To God again.

1907

FIUT LUX

"Give us this day our daily bread," and *light;*
For more to me, O Lord, than food is sight:
And I at noon have been
In twilight, where my fellow-men were seen
"As trees" that walked before me. E'en to-day
From time to time there falls upon my way
A feather of the darkness. But again
It passes; and amid the falling rain
Of tears, I lift, O Lord, mine eyes to Thee,
For, lo! I *see!*

1910

GOING BLIND

Back to the primal gloom
Where life began,
As to my mother's womb
Must I a man
Return:
Not to be born again,
But to remain;
And in the School of Darkness learn
What mean
"The things unseen."

Aug. 1908

BLIND

Again as in the desert way,
Behold my guides, a cloud by day,
  A flame by night;
For darkness wakens with the morn,
But dreams, of midnight slumber born,
  Bring back the light.

March, 1909

MAMMY

I loved her countenance whereon,
  Despite the longest day,
The tenderness of visions gone
  In shadow seemed to stay.
And now, when faithless sight is fled
  Beyond my waking gaze,
Of darkness I am not afraid—
  It is my Mammy's face.

1910

IN BLINDNESS

For me her life to consecrate,
  My Lady Light
Within her shadowy convent gate
  Is lost to sight.

I may not greet her; but a grace—
A gleam divine—
The rapture of her hidden face
Suffuses mine.

Oct. 1908

IN TENEBRIS

The dawn to ours is dusk to other eyes;
And, light away,
Our stars returning to their native skies
Forget the day.

If then, some life be brighter for the shade
That darkens mine,
To both, O Lord, more manifest be made
The light divine.

1910

DEJECTION

The sun is gone; and the forsaken sea—
Her glance a tear
Wherein all depths of tenderness appear—
Looks back at me,
Where I upon the strand,

The centre of the lone horizon, stand
Forlorn as she,
To know that when her darkness drifts away
Mine own must stay.

March, 1906

MY STAR

Since that the dewdrop holds the star
The long night through,
Perchance the satellite afar
Reflects the dew.

And while thine image in my heart
Doth steadfast shine,
There, haply, in thy heaven apart
Thou keepest mine.

1894

CLOISTERED

Within the compass of mine eyes
Behold, a lordly city lies—
A world to me unknown,
Save that along its crowded ways
Moves one whose heart in other days
Was mated to mine own.

I ask no more; enough for me
One heaven above us both to see,
  One calm horizon-line
Around us, like a mystic ring
That love has set, encompassing
  That kindred life and mine.

Sept. 1893

THE CAPTIVES

Apart forever dwelt the twain,
Save for one oft-repeated strain
Wherein what love alone could say
They learned and lavished day by day.

Strangers in all but misery
And music's hope-sustaining tie,
They lived and loved and died apart,
But soul to soul and heart to heart.

April, 1893

TO SIDNEY LANIER

The dewdrop holds the heaven above,
  Wherein a lark, unseen,
Outpours a rhapsody of love
  That fills the space between.

My heart a dewdrop is, and thou,
Dawn-spirit, far away,
Fillest the void between us now
With an immortal lay.

1894

AT LANIER'S GRAVE

I stand beside a comrade tree
That guards the spot where thou art laid;
For since the light is lost to me
I loiter in the shade.
I lean upon the rugged stone
As on the breast from whence I came,
To learn 'tis not my heart alone
That bears thy sacred name.

Nov. 1892

PHOTOGRAPHED

For years an ever-shifting shade
The sunshine of thy visage made;
Then, spider-like, the captive caught
In meshes of immortal thought.

E'en so, with half-averted eye,
Day after day I passed thee by,

Till suddenly a subtler art
Enshrined thee in my heart of heart.

Oct. 1892

YORICK'S SKULL

Poor jester! still upon the stage,
  Chap-fallen flung,
Where merry clowns from age to age
  Thy dirge have sung;
Yet more than eloquence may reach,
  Thought-heights among,
'Tis thine humanity to teach
  Sans brains or tongue.

1894.

KEATS—SAPPHO

Methinks, when first the nightingale
Was mated to thy deathless song,
That Sappho with emotion pale,
  Amid the Olympian throng,
Again, as in the Lesbian grove,
Stood listening with lips apart
To hear in thy melodious love
  The pantings of her heart.

April, 1893

TO SHELLEY

At Shelley's birth,
The Lark, dawn-spirit, with an anthem loud
Rose from the dusky earth
To tell it to the Cloud,
That, like a flower night-folded in the gloom,
Burst into morning bloom.

At Shelley's death,
The Sea, that deemed him an immortal, saw
A god's extinguished breath,
And landward, as in awe,
Upbore him to the altar whence he came,
And the rekindling flame.

1894

SAPPHO

A light upon the headland, flaming far,
We see thee o'er the widening waves of time,
Impassioned as a palpitating star,
Big with prophetic destiny sublime:
A momentary flash—a burst of song—
Then silence and a withering blank of pain.
We wait, alas! in tedious vigils long,
The meteor-gleam that cometh not again!

Our eyes are heavy and our visage wan;
  Our breath—a phantom of the darkness—glides
Ghostlike to swell the dismal caravan
  Of shadows, where thy lingering splendor hides,
Till with our tears and ineffectual sighs
  We quench the spark a smouldering hope supplies.

1894

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

With faith unshadowed by the night,
  Undazzled by the day,
With hope that plumed thee for the flight,
  And courage to assay,
God sent thee from the crowded ark,
  Christ-bearer, like the dove,
To find, o'er sundering waters dark,
  New lands for conquering love.

Oct. 1892

TWO EASTER LILIES

Behold the reed of scorn,
  Like Aaron's rod,
Hath blossomed to adorn
  The risen God.

And she, the broken bloom
That balmed His feet,
Is first before His tomb,
Her Lord to greet.

1910

TO VIOLET B. ON HER WEDDING DAY

"Sweet it is for Love to live,"
Thus a Blossom whispered me.
"But for Love a life to give
(Tell my sister Violet,
For a blossom too is she)
Sweeter yet."

May, 1896

THE LISTENER

(*In a volume of Shelley*)

Of worship, far away,
The Cloud unconscious lay;
Nor stooped the Lark to hear
His song's interpreter.
O Shelley, heedest thou
Thy lover listening now?

Aug. 1895

GENEVIEVE

Genevieve was all to me,
  Heart to heart we toiled together;
Shade in summer heat was she,
  Sunshine in the cloudy weather.
    Now alas, no more to me,
    Genevieve is dead.

Genevieve was fair as May,
  Eyes that dreamed the light of heaven,
Locks whereon the life beams lay,
  E'en in death to her were given;
    Sunshine sped in clouds away,
    Genevieve is dead.

Genevieve, not all in vain
  Fell thy sands of life before me;
Hope in every golden grain,
  Star-like glimmers to allure me
    To a life beyond the main,
    To a love not dead.

THE JEWESS

A mother she in Israel,
With eyes, like Jacob's well,
Untouched by time—their tender grace,

As from the Temple's inmost place,
Telling the twofold mystery
Of Eden and Gethsemane.

March, 1891

POE'S CRITICS

A certain tyrant to disgrace
The more a rebel's resting-place,
Compelled the people every one
To hurl in passing there a stone;
  Which done, the rugged pile became
  A sepulchre to keep his name.

And thus it is with Edgar Poe;
Each passing critic has his throw,
  Nor sees, defeating his intent,
  How lofty grows the monument.

Feb. 1885

TO EDGAR ALLAN POE

Dead fifty years? Not so;
Nay, fifty years ago
  Death, obloquy, and spite
To curse his ashes came.
  But lo, the living light

Beneath the breath of shame
Indignant, spurned the night
And withered them in flame.

Oct. 1899

FOR THE POE CENTENARY

His Peck-ability to show,
Let Harry Thurston Peck at Poe,
And thank his stars like Matthews Brander
That Poe is silent now to slander;
Or by the scourge with which they score him
He'd make them bite the dust before him.

Jan. 1908

POE'S PURGATORY

All others rest; but I
Dream-haunted lie—
A distant roar,
As of tumultuous waters, evermore
About my brain.

E'en sleep, though fain
To soothe me, flies affrighted, and alone
I bear the incumbent stone
Of death

That stifles breath,
But not the hideous chorus crying "Shame!"
Upon my name.

Had I not Song?
Yea, and it lingers yet
The souls to fret
Of an ignoble throng,
Aflame with hate
Of the exulting fate
That hurls her idols from her temple fair
And shrines me there.

1907

A HEART-CRY

Come back to me! but not as now ye are,
O friends afar!
For it were pain,
More keen than parting, so to meet again,
With all the change that time, perchance, hath wrought
In form and thought,
To make us strangers in each other's eyes,
Save for long-cloistered sympathies.

1902

UNITED

Here buried side by side
We long have waited with between us two
A place for you.

The powers of darkness tried
To chill our hearts to ashes; but behold,
They grew not cold.

You journey far and wide;
Our eyes were on you till they turned your way
To where we lay.

Henceforth, all fate defied,
Our kindred dust commingling, three in one—
We slumber, son.

SONNETS

DEDICATION

As waters from the lowliest valleys breathe
Their tribute vapors to the mountain height,
Where each, anon, transfigured of the light,
Enkindles all the parent wave beneath;
So, these my misty reveries I wreathe
And waft them to the summit of thy sight,
Till in that sunshine, shriven from the night,
A mirrored benediction they bequeath.
For long thy lordly Eminence hath stood
Among the favored of the Olympian Nine,
Upon whose ear thy psaltering voice renewed
The ancient echoes of the classic shrine,
Whereon the while my tottering steps intrude,
Fain would I place a timorous hand in thine.

1882

TO MY LAMP

Companion of my vigil, silently,
At midnight, when the voiceful world is still,
Alone with me thou watchest. Peaceably
Thy radiance stems the darkened tide and chill
That floods the outer prospect. On thy ray

Night's foamless torrent breaks not, but retires
As from a charmed circle, far away,
To glooms beyond. E'en so, Promethean fires,
Within my throbbing temples, fed of pain,
Resist the powers around them—wild desires,
Fevered of passion, as the troubled main
That slumbers not. Thy task with morn expires,
But nought to me of respite brings the day,
Till life is wasted, as thine oil, away.

1882

YESTERDAY

As light on lids that slumber warms unseen,
So now thy veiled presence breathing near
Soft penetrates the web of darkness drear
That Night, the grim Arachne, weaves between
Wan Twilight and her roseate sister-queen,
Imperial Dawn. Behold how many a tear
(Pale records of immortal memory dear)
Attests thy wonted influence serene!
And, lo! the winged moments one by one,
Foreshadowed of the ages yet to be,
Upon the bleak horizon where the sun
Tinges the midst of dim futurity,
Beholding here thy glimmering footsteps gone,
Speed through the trackless interval to thee.

1882

HOMELESS

Methinks that if my spirit could behold
Its earthly habitation void and chill,
Whence all its time-encircled good and ill
Expanded to eternity, 'twould fold
Its trembling pinions o'er the bosom cold,
Recalling there the pulses' wonted thrill,
And lean perchance to catch the echo still
That erst in life the dream of passion told.
How calm the dissolution! Could she spurn
Her spouse, so late, and brother? Could she trace
The strange, familiar lineaments, and mark
The doom of her own writing in the face,
To find, alas! no more the vital spark,
Nor breathe one sigh of pity to return?

1882

AD MONTEM

I lift mine eyes, and lo! impetuous tears
Bedim them, as the tides of thought o'erflow
The soul's expansion. On thy peaks of snow
Above the boreal revel Nature hears
The chorus of the night-enkindled spheres
Roll westward, while their flickering torches grow
Like phantoms in the orient's warmer glow
Ere yet the Dawn's imperial crest appears.

But on thy deep foundations slumber Night
And everlasting Silence. 'Tis their dream
Alone that lingers when the darkness wanes;
Amid the ephemeral seasons' bloom and blight,
When earth and sky and ocean changeful seem,
That sovereign Calm inviolate remains.

1882

COLUMBUS

'Tis read of one, a ferryman of old,
St. Christopher, who on his shoulders bore
Across the torrent to the welcome shore
The infant Christ. The alien waters rolled
Their weltering weight tumultuous; but 'tis told
The pilot swerved not 'mid the desperate roar
Till landed safe, his tottering burden sore
He trembled, lost in reverence, to behold.
And thou to me, in that prophetic dream,
Which led thee westward o'er the wandering main,
Christ-laden, to the land whereof no gleam
Had cleft the compass of the narrower brain,
The legendary Christopher dost seem,
Fulfilling all his destiny again.

1882

SHAKESPEARE'S MOURNERS

I saw the grave of Shakespeare in a dream,
And round about it grouped a wondrous throng,
His own majestic mourners, who belong
Forever to the Stage of Life, and seem
The rivals of reality. Supreme
Stood Hamlet, as erewhile the graves among,
Mantled in thought; and sad Ophelia sung
The same swan-dirge she chanted in the stream.
Othello, dark in destiny's eclipse,
Laid on the tomb a lily. Near him wept
Dejected Constance. Fair Cordelia's lips
Moved prayerfully the while her father slept,
And each and all, inspired of vital breath,
Kept vigil o'er the sacred spoils of death.

1882

TO HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL NEWMAN

Father—for loftier titles cannot hide
The tenderness of thy paternity
From eyes that turn with filial gaze to thee,
Sons of thy faith across the ocean wide,
Led of thy light from paths unsanctified,
Thine own begotten, though unseen are we.
Thy loss, thy gain, we count our own to be;

And now our hearts exulting in the tide
Of favors shed upon thee from the hand
Whose grace outgrows its giving, fondly glow
With more than silent syllables express;
O, westward as the sunshine to our land
Still let thy love, a light perpetual, flow,
Thy children, bowed in reverence, to bless.

May, 1879

THE INDIAN OF SAN SALVADOR

What time the countless arrow-heads of light
Keen twinkled on the bended heavens, back-drawn
With deadly aim, at signal of the Dawn,
To slay the slumbering, dusky warrior, Night,
I dreamed a dream. And, lo! three spirits, white
As mist that gathers when the rain is gone,
Came walking o'er the waters, whereupon
The very waves seemed quivering with affright.
I woke and heard, while yet the vision stayed,
A prophecy: "Behold the coming race
Before whose feet the forest kings shall fall
Prostrate; and ye, like twilight shadows tall
That wither at the sun's uplifted face,
Shall pass in silence to a deeper shade."

Nov. 1892

KEATS

Upon thy tomb 'tis graven, "Here lies one
Whose name is writ in water." Could there be
A flight of fancy fitlier feigned for thee,
A fairer motto for her favorite son?
For, as the wave, thy varying numbers run—
Now crested proud in tidal majesty,
Now tranquil as the twilight reverie
Of some dim lake the white moon looks upon
While teems the world with silence. Even there,
In each Protean rainbow-tint that stains
The breathing canvas of the atmosphere,
We read an exhalation of thy strains.
Thus on the scroll of nature everywhere
Thy name, a deathless syllable, remains.

Oct. 1880

SILENCE

Temple of God, from all eternity
Alone like Him without beginning found;
Of time and space and solitude the bound,
Yet in thyself of all communion free.
Is, then, the temple holier than He
That dwells therein? Must reverence surround
With barriers the portal lest a sound
Profane it? Nay; behold a mystery!

What was, abides; what is, hath ever been;
The lowliest the loftiest sustains.
A silence, by no breath of utterance stirred—
Virginity in motherhood—remains,
Clear, midst a cloud of all-pervading sin,
The voice of love's unutterable word.

Sept. 1892

UNUTTERED

Waiting for words—as on the broad expanse
Of heaven the formless vapors of the night,
Expectant, wait the oracle of light
Interpreting their dumb significance;
Or like a star that in the morning glance
Shrinks, as a folding blossom, from the sight,
Nor wakens till upon the western height
The shadows to their evening towers advance—
So, in my soul, a dream ineffable,
Expectant of the sunshine or the shade,
Hath oft, upon the brink of twilight chill,
Or at the dawn's pale glimmering portal stayed
In tears, that all the quivering eyelids fill,
In smiles, that on the lip of silence fade.

June, 1883

SOLITUDE

Thou wast to me what to the changing year
Its seasons are—a joy forever new;
What to the night its stars, its heavenly dew,
Its silence; what to dawn its lark-song clear;
To noon, its light—its fleckless atmosphere,
Where ocean and the overbending blue,
In passionate communion, hue for hue,
As one in love's circumference appear.
O brimming heart, with tears for utterance
Alike of joy and sorrow! lift thine eyes
And sphere the desolation. Love is flown;
And in the desert's widening expanse
Grim silence, like a sepulchre of stone,
Stands charnelling a soul's funereal sighs.

Nov.–Dec. 1892

LOVE'S RETROSPECT

I knew that he was dying; for the leaves
Late-fallen shivered on the frosty ground,
Disconsolate, with the foreboding sound
That autumn whispers to the heart that grieves.
The sunshine, slanting upward, smote the sheaves
O'ershadowing the hill-tops ranged around,
And where the swallow's empty nest was found,
Spattered, as if with blood, the sheltering eaves.

Twin fires together faded; and but one
Rewakened o'er a world henceforth to me
In everlasting twilight. To the past
The present pays its tribute, whereupon
Each moment coins the selfsame effigy—
The more than all by wealth unwidowed cast.

March, 1893

A WINTER TWILIGHT

Blood-shotten through the bleak gigantic trees
The sunset, o'er a wilderness of snow,
Startles the wolfish winds that wilder grow
As hunger mocks their howling miseries.
In every skulking shadow fancy sees
The menace of an undiscovered foe—
A sullen footstep, treacherous and slow,
That comes or into deeper darkness flees.
Nor day nor night, in time's eternal round
Whereof the tides are telling, e'er hath passed
This isthmus-hour—this dim, mysterious land
That sets their lives asunder—where up-cast
Their earliest and their latest waves resound,
As each, alternate, nears or leaves the strand.

March, 1893

GLIMPSES

As one who in the hush of twilight hears
The pausing pulse of nature, when the light
Commingles in the dim mysterious rite
Of darkness with the mutual pledge of tears,
Till soft, anon, one timorous star appears,
Pale-budding as the earliest blossom white
That comes in winter's livery bedight,
To hide the gifts of genial spring she bears—
So, unto me—what time the mysteries
Of consciousness and slumber weave a dream
And pause above it with abated breath,
Like intervals in music—lights arise,
Beyond prophetic nature's farthest gleam,
That teach me half the mystery of death.

1894

THE AGONY

I wrestled, as did Jacob, till the dawn,
With the reluctant Spirit of the Night
That keeps the keys of Slumber. Worn and white,
We paused a panting moment, while anon
The darkness paled around us. Thereupon—
His mighty limbs relaxing in affright—
The Angel pleaded: "Lo, the morning light!
O Israel, release me and begone!"

Then said I, "Nay, a captive to my will
I hold thee till the blessing thou dost keep
Be mine." Whereat he breathed upon my brow;
And, as the dew upon the twilight hill,
So on my spirit, over-wearied now,
Came tenderly the benediction, sleep.

March, 1893

THE DEAD TREE

Erect in death thou standest gaunt and bare,
Thy limbs uplifted to the wintry sky,
To supplicate its pity or defy
The threat of wrath with towering despair.
Around thee, like a wizard's widening snare,
Lithe shadows in a web fantastic lie,
Spun of the moon, in midnight sorcery,
Down gazing with a madman's vacant stare.
What reads she in thy ruin? Lives the past
Recorded in the present? Lingers here
The legend of a glory overcast,
The song of birds long silent, and the stir
Of leaves forever scattered to the blast,
Yet echoed in eternal dreams to her?

Feb. 1890

THE PETREL

A wanderer o'er the sea-graves ever green,
Whereon the foam-flowers blossom day by day,
Thou fittest as a doomful shadow gray
That from the wave no sundering light can wean.
What wouldst thou from the deep unfathomed glean,
Frail voyager? and whither leads thy way?
Or art thou, as the sailor legends say,
An exile from the spirit-world unseen?
Lo! desolate, above a colder tide,
Pale memory, a sea-bird like to thee,
Flits outward where the whitening billows hide
What seemed of life the one reality—
A mist whereon the morning bloom hath died,
Returning, ghost-like, to the restless sea.

Sept. 1883

AT ANCHOR

How calm upon the twilight water sleeps
With folded wings yon solitary sail,
Safe-harbored, haply dreaming of the gale
That wolf-like o'er the waste deserted leaps;
One star—a signal light above her—keeps
Watch; and, behold, its pictured image pale
Gleams far below, a seeming anchor frail,
Where onward still the noiseless current sweeps.

Star of my life, pale planet, far removed,
Oh, be thou, when the twilight deepens, near!
Set in my soul thine image undisproved
By death and darkness, till the morning clear
Behold me in the presence I have loved,
My beacon here, my bliss eternal there!

1894

SHADOWS

Ye shrink not wholly from us when the morn
Arises red with slaughter, and the slain,
Sweet visages of tender dreams remain
To haunt us through the wakened hours forlorn,
Nor when the noontide cometh, and the thorn
Of light is centred in the quivering brain,
And memory her pilgrimage of pain
Renews, with fainting footsteps, overworn.
Nay, then, what time the satellite of day
Pursues his path victorious, and the west,
Her clouds beleaguered vanishing away,
A desert seems of solitude oppressed,
Around us still your hovering pinions stay,
The pledges of returning night and rest.

May, 1883

THE MOUNTAIN

Altar whereon the lordly sacrifice
Of incense from the reverent vales below
Is offered at the dawn's first kindling glow
And when the day's last smouldering ember dies,
Around thee, too, the kindred sympathies
Of life—itself a vapor—breathe and flow,
And yearn beyond thy pinnacle of snow
To wing the trackless region of the skies.
Thy shadow broods above me, and mine own
Sleeps as a child beneath it. O'er my dreams
Thou dost as an abiding presence pour
Thy spirit in the melancholy moan
Of cavern winds and far-resounding streams,
As sings the ocean to the listening shore.

Dec. 1883

UNMOORED

To die in sleep—to drift from dream to dream
Along the banks of slumber, beckoned on
Perchance by forms familiar, till anon,
Unconsciously, the ever-widening stream
Beyond the breakers bore thee, and the beam
Of everlasting morning woke upon
Thy dazzled gaze, revealing one by one
Thy visions grown immortal in its gleam.

O blessed consummation! thus to feel
In death no touch of terror. Tenderly
As shadows to the evening hills he came
In garb of God's dear messenger to thee,
Nor on thy weary eyelids broke the seal
In reverence for a brother's holier name.

1894

EUGENIE

In exile, widowed, childless, desolate,
Thou sittest in the majesty of woe;
And nations gaze, with shuddering murmurs low,
Upon the direful trilogy of fate.
Hushed are the warring interests of state
Beneath the pall of sorrow. Foes forego
Their wonted discord, and with footsteps slow
And meekened foreheads move compassionate.
All exiles weave their miseries with thine;
All widows turn with sympathy to thee;
All mothers desolate and childless made
Mingle their moan with this thine agony:
And yet, to thee the royal lot is laid—
Threefold the cross that measures love divine.

1894

THE PASCHAL MOON

Thy face is whitened with remembered woe;
For thou alone, pale satellite, didst see,
Amid the shadows of Gethsemane,
The mingled cup of sacrifice o'erflow;
Nor hadst the power of utterance to show
The wasting wound of silent sympathy,
Till sudden tides, obedient to thee,
Sobbed, desolate in weltering anguish, low.
The holy night returneth year by year;
And, while the mystic vapors from thy rim
Distil the dews, as from the Victim there
The red drops trickled in the twilight dim,
The ocean's changeless threnody we hear,
And gaze upon thee as thou didst on Him.

1894

GOLGOTHA

Alone I stand upon the sacred height,
Where erst, at noon, the night its mantle flung
O'er the Divine Humanity that hung
To brutal gaze exposed. The conscious light
To sudden blindness withered at the sight
Of mortal pangs from wounds immortal wrung;
The earth her gates sepulchral open swung,
Impatient for the soul's descending flight

To her expectant shades. O Calvary!
Again the dripping darkness crowns thy brow,
And I (as then, to His all-seeing mind)
Weep 'mid the general gloom. Oh! let me be,
As in those hours of anguish, hidden now
In shades of death, the light of life to find.

1894

THE PORTRAIT

Each has his Angel-Guardian. Mine, I know,
Looks on me from that pictured face. Behold,
How clear, between those rifted clouds of gold,
The radiant brow! It is the morning glow
Of innocence ere yet the heart let go
The leading-strings of heaven. Upon the eyes
No shadow; like the restful noonday skies
They sanctify the teeming world below.
Why bows my soul before it? None but thou,
O tender child, has known the life estranged
From thee and all that made thy days of joy
The measure of my own. Behold me now—
The man that begs a blessing of the boy—
His very *self;* but from himself how changed!

Jan. 1893

DAYBREAK

What was thy dream, sweet Morning? for, behold,
Thine eyes are heavy with the balm of night,
And, as reluctant lilies to the light,
The languid lids of lethargy unfold.
Was it the tale of yesterday retold—
An echo wakened from the western height,
Where the warm glow of sunset dalliance bright
Grew, with the pulse of waning passion, cold?
Or was it some heraldic vision grand
Of legends that forgotten ages keep
In twilight, where the sundering shoals of day
Vex the dim sails, unpiloted, of sleep,
Till one by one the freighting fancies gay,
Like bubbles, vanish on the treacherous strand?

Nov. 1880

FORECAST

All night a rose, with budding warmth aglow,
Above a sleeper's dreamful visage hung,
Pale with intenser passion than the tongue
Of man is tuned to utter. Breathing low,
The night winds, fledged with odor, to and fro
Went wandering the languid leaves among;
While darkling woke a mocking-bird and sung
All echoes that the noonday warblers know.

The dream, the song, the odor, each in one
Upbreathing as a starry vapor, spread,
And from the golden minarets of morn,
Far heralding the unawakened sun,
A rapture as of poesy outshed
Upon the spirit of a babe unborn.

1897

TO AN IDOL

Mute oracle of meek humanity,
Save to its sense of blindness wholly blind,
That drifting wide in misery, to find
Some beacon o'er the night-encumbered sea,
Steered in pathetic ignorance to thee;
What sighs, what tears—of agony confined
Within the sunless prison of the mind,
Walled up of doubt and locked in mystery,
Couldst thou, if thought were voluble, reveal
Of panting love and hopes all winged to rise
But netted of bewilderment, and worn
To thin despair, deep-shuddering to feel
No warmth below, above, no sympathies,
No rest but in oblivion forlorn!

1882

KEDRON

Where silence broods on ruin, thou alone,
Sweet oracle, in rippling numbers low
Dost onward through the waste of ages flow
As an eternal echo. With thy tone
Blent David's holy anthems, and the moan
That shook his heart in exile didst thou know,
What time his tears of tributary woe
Commingled with thy wave. And David's Son
In after years on love's vicarious way
Breathed life above thee, and thy torrent told
Its music to the wide-proclaiming sea;
And still through all earth's changes manifold,
Where death and silence strive for mastery,
Throbs the prophetic burden of thy lay.

1882

THE DRUID

Godlike beneath his grave divinities,
The last of all their worshippers, he stood.
The shadows of a vanished multitude
Enwound him, and their voices in the breeze
Made murmur, while the meditative trees
Reared of their strong fraternal branches rude
A temple meet for prayer. What blossoms strewed
The path between life's morning hours and these?

What lay beyond the darkness? He alone
The sunshine and the shadow and the dew
Had shared alike with leaf and flower and stem:
Their life had been his lesson; and from them
A dream of immortality he drew,
As in their fate foreshadowing his own.

Aug. 1896

THE HERMIT

High on the hoary mountain-top he dwelt
Alone with God, whose handiwork above
The wonders of the firmament approve
In an eternal silence. There he spelt
The name of the Omnipotent, and knelt
In lowly reverence of adoring love.
Beneath him, all the elements that move
In Nature's prayerful harmonies he felt
And knew their mystic meaning. Thus the tone
Of lifted billows and the storm that sways
The forest-seas in chorus spake alone
Divinity, scarce hidden from his gaze;
And with their mighty voices blent his own
In one majestic utterance of praise.

1882

POE

Sad spirit, swathed in brief mortality,
Of fate and fervid fantasies the prey,
Till the remorseless demon of dismay
O'erwhelmed thee—lo! thy doleful destiny
Is chanted in the requiem of the sea
And shadowed in the crumbling ruins gray
That beetle o'er the tarn. Here all the day
The Raven broods on solitude and thee;
Here gloats the moon at midnight, while the Bells
Tremble, but speak not lest thy Ulalume
Should startle from her slumbers, or Lenore
Hearken the love-forbidden tone that tells
The shrouded legend of thine early doom
And blast the bliss of heaven forevermore.

1882

SHELLEY

Shelley, the ceaseless music of thy soul
Breathes in the Cloud and in the Skylark's song,
That float as an embodied dream along
The dewy lids of morning. In the dole
That haunts the West Wind, in the joyous roll
Of Arethusan fountains, or among
The wastes where Ozymandias the strong
Lies in colossal ruin, thy control

Speaks in the wedded rhyme. Thy spirit gave
A fragrance to all nature and a tone
To inexpressive silence. Each apart—
Earth, Air, and Ocean—claims thee as its own;
The twain that bred thee, and the panting wave
That clasped thee like an overflowing heart.

July, 1880

AT KEATS'S GRAVE

"I feel the flowers growing over me."
Prophetic thought! Behold, no cypress gloom
Portrays in dim memorial the doom
That quenched the ray of starlike destiny!
E'en death itself deals tenderly with thee;
For here the livelong year the violets bloom
And swing their fragrant censers till the tomb
Forgets the legend of mortality.
Nay, while the pilgrim periods of time
Alternate song and holy requiem sing,
As through the circling centuries sublime
They scatter frost or genial sunshine bring,
With gathered sweets of every varying clime
They weave around thee one perpetual spring.

1882

RESTRAINT

Pause while thine eyes are alien to the scene
That lies before thee. Let the Fancy range,
As yet she may, sole sovereign of the strange
Uncharted region of that wide demesne
Where Truth the tyrant never yet hath been.
He, once supreme, as in a narrowed grange
Thenceforth abides forever—Chance and Change
Foregone his guarded barriers between.
Pass not; before the all-discerning Light
The angels veil their faces. To the wise
The tree of Knowledge in their Eden stands
Untasted, lest the Death that in it lies
Prevail, the bud of Innocence to blight,
And cloud the glimpse of ever-widening lands.

1897

THE BOY BISHOP

"A game, Marcellus!" "Well, what shall it be?
Let's play we're Christians." And with one accord
The children grouped around their mimic lord,
Marcellus, throned as Sovereign Pontiff. He
The part so often played in mockery,
With solemn rite enacted, word for word
Repeating as on each in turn he poured
The waters of a new Nativity.

Then burst the thunders of an edict. Rome
Trembled, and her gods offended frowned
Foreshadowing the hurricane to be.
Men faltered; but among the faithful found,
The yearlings of the flock, with martyrdom
Marcellus and his neophytes were crowned.

1902

TO SIDNEY LANIER

The same blue-bending dome encanopies
Thine ashes and the spark that kindles mine;
Upon the selfsame bosom we recline,
When with the wind, the wave, land-lessening, dies
And, 'twixt our souls the star-wrought mysteries—
Of Hope the sacred oracles divine—
Steadfast above the vault of darkness shine,
To point the path benighted to the skies.
For there, of dreams unsepulchred and free
"To face the vast sweet Visage, unafraid,"
That erst thy spirit reverenced to see
In Nature's lowliest lineaments portrayed,
Thou keepest watchful memory of me,
A lingering phantom of the mortal shade.

Feb. 1888

TO THE FREEDMAN

Friend of the dusky visage, whereupon
When all things else have yielded to the light
Abides the cleaving shadow of a night
The darker for the noonday's fiercer sun;
Among earth's kindred nations nearer none
Than thine and mine. Thou standest in the fight,
A slave beside a master for whose right
Thine arm, with his uplifted, lost or won.
Nay, now the victor vanquished, when the foe
Exulting in a land of bondage free,
Flung out the signal, "Smite the smiter!" lo,
Thou wouldst not; but with new-wed Liberty
Wentest thy way—nor yet as glad to go,
But oft in tears that all the world might see.

April, 1895

TO AN ANCIENT LUTE

As one who on the precincts of a shrine
Treads softly lest his footfall, echoing there,
Profane the cloistered solitude of prayer,
So reverence stays this venturous hand of mine
Upon the brink of sound. Lo! themes divine,
Hushed of the folding silence, everywhere,
Upon the drowsy bosom of the air,
Around thy form oblivious recline.

O, bid me wake them! Let me call again
Thy latest born, the last whose lingering sigh
Sank, as departing genius retired,
Into the mist of slumber. Hark, a train
Of echoes heralding the anthem high!
Prepare, my soul, to greet the strain inspired.

1882

AT ST. HELENA

The night encamps around thee. From afar
The bannered hosts of outer darkness throng,
And crested billows shout their battle song
To greet the dreadful summoner of war.
The throbbing bursts of molten thunder jar
The firmament; and lo! the mountains strong
Are livid with the lightning's leprous tongue,
As nations smit of some malignant star!
What spirit wroth, from Erebos uptorn,
Is launched upon the laboring tempest wide?
Is it the captive conqueror's, forlorn,
His late avenging destiny defied?—
Who laughed?—or was it but the seething scorn
Of ocean kindled at the dream of pride?

1882

NARRATIVE POEMS

MY GUIDE

Lift up thine eyes, my child,
  That I may see
The innocence that smiled
  In one like thee—
    Thy mother gone.

Scarce older than thou art,
  With maiden power
She won a wayward heart,
  That till that hour
    Had worshipped none.

Swift as a bird of spring
  In joyous flight,
That cleaves with shadeless wing
  The sea of light,
    Our morning fled.

When, sudden gloom—and lo!
  A troubled sky—
A wail of stifled woe—
  An agony—
    And hope was dead.

Then, as a crystal tear
  Of sorrow born,

Didst thou, pale star, appear,
Like me forlorn
In cheerless night.

I wept, and weeping turned
To gaze on thee,
And through the mist discerned
A beam for me,
Lit of her light.

1897

GIULIO

"Father!"—the trembling voice betrayed
The troubled heart; "Be not afraid,"
I softly answered—"Woe is me!
Dead unto all but misery!
And yet, a child of innocence
Is mine—a son unknowing whence
His origin—whom, unaware,
As with an angel's watchful care
Thy gentle hand hath guided. Now
He waits the consecrating vow
Of priesthood, and to-morrow stands
A Levite, with uplifted hands
To bless thee. May a mother dare

To look upon that face and share,
Unseen, the blessing of her son?
Deny me not. So be it done
To thee in thy last agony,
As now thou doest unto me!"

She had her will. Secluded there
Within a cloistered place of prayer,
She saw and wept; then, all unknown,
Shrunk back into the world, alone.

Days passed. A winter's cheerless morn
With summons came. A soul forlorn
Craved help in danger imminent;
And, Christlike, on his mission went
The new anointed.
"Strange," he said,
"The gleams, like inspiration, shed
Upon the dying! There she lay,
Poor reprobate! life's stormy day
In clouds departing. Suddenly,
As from a trance, beholding me,
'Giulio! hast thou come?' she cried,
And with her arms about me died."

He wondered; and I turned away,
Lest tears my secret should betray.

1897

ST. CHRISTOPHER

It was a very little Boy
  That on the river side
Stood calling, "Ferryman, ahoy!
  Come, take me o'er the tide!"

The Ferryman came wading on,
  And seeing but a child,
"Get up upon my shoulder, Son,"
  He said, and, stooping, smiled.

But when into the stream again
  The giant boldly strode,
His every muscle was astrain
  Beneath the growing load;

Till finally, with failing strength,
  He reached the other bank,
And putting down the Boy at length
  Upon the margin sank.

"Who art thou," wondering, he cried,
  "That hast so burdened me?"
"The Son of God," the Boy replied,
  "Who bore the Cross for thee.

"Henceforth thy task pursuing here
  For love of souls forlorn

Thou'lt bear the name of Christopher,
As thou the Christ hast borne;

"And little sufferers that see
How great is thy reward
Shall cry, 'Like Christopher are we
Thy Ferrymen, O Lord.'"

1923

QUO VADIS?

The sedge was sere; the water still,
As waiting for the wintry chill;
When, shadow-like along the hill,
She moved alone.

The owl, upon a blasted limb,
From sepulchres of silence dim
Made charnel echoes mock for him
Their dying moan.

Upon the forehead of the night
The moon, foreboding in affright—
A film of solitary light—
Above her shone.

What meant the omen of the bird?
The moon with blinding vapours blurred?

What in her heart of anguish stirred
The stifled groan?

A plunge, a ripple, and a sigh
Of waters; fleeting soul, reply,
Was it for death of love to die,
Or to atone?

Dec. 1902

REPOSE

I laid me down in solitude, but not alone:
The night was with me, and the stars above me shone;
The Earth, my mother, pillowed me, and to her breast
I nestled as a weary child that yearns for rest.
The drowsy ripple of a stream that murmured near
With lisping leaves made lullaby to soothe mine ear;
But o'er the mystery of calm my brooding mind
Hung as an eagle motionless upon the wind,
Till stirred with energy of thought, on pinions strong,
Through swift-receding centuries it swept along,
Far out of space and period, where yet of time
No wave had drifted to disturb the depth sublime.
Then, lo! from vastness infinite, one lonely ray
Gleamed, trembling in its solitude, upon the way,
And through the region measureless, a whisper came—
A thrill of hidden majesty that breathed my name:
"Yon beam upon immensity that breathed thy name:

From all eternity hath been thy dwelling, Man.
There wast thou, ever intimate, a thought of Him—
The One-Intelligence—that spans the ages dim.
The time, the place, all influence prevailing here,
In pregnant lineament conceived, was imaged there;
For in the mystic harmony of Nature kind,
These kindred elements fulfil a chord designed,
The shadows that encompass thee, the soothing sleep,
The swathing dreams elysian, the silence deep,
All speak one calm Original, whose power divine
Hath wrought for them a destiny that measures thine;
For all to man are ministrants of heavenly love,
Out-breathings from the Fountain-head of rest above."

Jan. 1893

THE FURLOUGH

"Home!" he said; and westward turning
  Looked upon the setting sun.
"Heed thee, child!" a sentry muttered,
  "Safety on the ramparts none."
"Naught I fear," the boy made answer,
  "Battle shock nor random gun;
Homeward all my heart advances;
    Victory's won!"

In his eyes the light of morning
  Met the slow-declining day,

Where the bow of peace expanding,
Lit with hope's celestial ray—
Born of sunshine, cloud-engendered,
Sorrow washed in tears away—
"Strife to holy calm surrenders,"
Seemed to say.

Fair he stood, as in a vision;
When, with sudden cry of dread,
Forward sprang each sturdy comrade
To support the fallen head—
Swift a thirsty flash, unerring,
To the font of life had sped!
Calm he lay. We bent above him,
"Home he goeth," some one said.
With the dew our tears were falling
O'er the dead.

DESTINY

"The stars above us govern our condition."—*King Lear*

Oft had a melancholy star,
Of human aspect mild,
In pensive vigil gazed upon
A sleeping child,
And whitened, as the wave of light
Dispelled the vision from his sight.

Behind the sun, disconsolate,
The livelong summer day,
In love and loneliness he sighed
  The hours away,
Till roused from reverie to feel
The twilight vapors o'er him steal.

Night after night, all tremulous,
Distraught, and paler grown,
He saw, enamoured of the spell,
  That form alone,
Nor found amid the realms of air
A paragon of love so fair.

"Alas!" and silently a tear
The swelling thought betrayed,
"Forlorn, sweet child, my destiny
  Apart!" he said;
"A phantom of perpetual night
To woo thy slumbering orbs of light!

"Lost in sublimity of space
Above the eternal snow
That clothes in raiment virginal
  The peaks below,
In vain this rhapsody of sighs
To life the fringes of thine eyes.

"O, for some charm melodious!
A seraph-tone—to sweep
In throbbing syllables adown

The tide of sleep,
And with the conscious smile to raise
Thy spirit to my wistful gaze!"

He ceased; for, hark! a nightingale
From dreams all passion-wrought,
Wakes into song, interpreting
Thy plaintive thought,
Till, soft as lily white,
The eyelids blossom with delight.

And lo! the child in ecstasy
Of reverence hath bent
Upon the burning satellite
His gaze intent,
While blend in rapture of desire
The mortal and immortal fire.

Serene but coldly beautiful
At dewy dawn of day,
A moon-pale masterpiece of Death
In marble lay,
And o'er it, tremulously far,
The splendor of the morning star.

1882

LINDENWOOD

Revelry wakes in the dim halls of Lindenwood;
Strange is the minstrelsy there to be heard;
Long have they slumbered in silence and solitude,
Haunted alone of the night-roving bird.

Swells with its chorus the mirth-mingled banquet song,
Fresh as the tide-lifted billows at play;
Why to the festal board comes not the bridal throng?
Where, with the bride, doth the bridegroom delay?

Lingering still stands the lord of green Lindenwood,
Waiting the bride, for her nuptials arrayed,
Loth to be led from the bower of her maidenhood,
Lady of lineage proud to be made.

Silently there at her portal he listeneth;
Gloweth his heart with a rapture inspired;
While in his glance as a beacon-star glisteneth
Love with the flash of expectancy fired.

Lo! is it she in the moonlight that beckoneth,
Timing her step to the faint-flowing song?
Nought but the spell of her presence he reckoneth,
Flitting the intricate mazes along.

Still from his touch like a shadow ethereal
Glideth she on the dim-veiling light
Till, as the torch in a vapor funereal,
Quenched is the wildering vision to sight!

Hark! let the choral-song cease in old Lindenwood!
Pray for a soul from life's revelry fled!
High in her chamber, the shrine of her maidenhood,
Pale as her bridal-wreath lieth she, dead.

Mourn, let us mourn for the gray walls of Lindenwood,
There, nevermore, be the minstrelsy heard;
Leave them alone in their silence and solitude,
Haunted again of the night-roving bird.

1882

THE VISION OF THE TARN

Alone in contemplation lost,
  I stood upon a castled height,
Dark beetling o'er a lurid tarn
  That glassed the brow of night.

Between the icy flash of stars,
  Above me sprinkled and beneath,
The silence of the listening air
  Was counterfeit of death.

No cloud upon the naked sky,
  No ripple on the lake below;
But o'er the sluggish waters hung
  A phosphorescent glow,

That suddenly, all quivering wan,
As smitten with the throes of birth,
Upheaving, vanished, to reveal
A phantom not of earth—

A lily wonderful as light,
Unfolded on the balmy deep,
And, cradled in its bosom, lay
A presence lost in sleep.

And tenderly a star remote
Shed holy lustre o'er the place,
Where innocence and peace betrayed
Such unimagined grace

That e'en the calm celestial orb,
Enamoured of the dream below,
With tremulous emotion pale
Diffused a milder glow.

And I beheld, in mystery,
The secret of my vision fair—
That of a relic sprung the flower
That bore its image there.

And from the watchful satellite,
The dwelling of a spirit fled,
That faithful sentinel of love
Its vacant shrine surveyed,

And knew, through all transition seen,
Its place and habitation dear,
Still waiting, in the throb of hope,
Its resurrection here.

Long had I gazed; but, lo! a cloud,
Down-swooping as a bird of night,
O'erwhelmed me, and the phantasy
Was blotted from my sight.

1882

THE RHYME OF THE ROCK

Creation's morning broke upon my brow;
The joyous sea,
Baptized of light, as I behold it now,
Encompassed me
With all its breathing tides of voiceful majesty.

The tender dawn, a virgin, blushed before
The rising sun,
And wrought of mist a folding mantle pure
Her charms upon,
When, lo! the quickening glance she fondly strove to shun.

Swift rolled to noon the unaccustomed wheel.
Then westward sped,

Where, fain the kindling radiance to feel,
Rich vapors spread
Beneath their monarch's feet and o'er his regal head.

Then soft the budding crescent silvered through
The twilight dim,
And darkening to its full-blown splendor grew
The burnished rim,
While sang the choral waves a hoarse triumphal hymn.

The circling years to centuries unfold
As moments passed;
Nor Time nor Death one dismal shadow cold
Upon me cast;
All earth and heaven reposed in calm communion vast.

But Change, alas! on sudden pinions borne
With darkness fell;
And blind Confusion, from the womb uptorn
Of haggard Hell,
Spun o'er the dizzy world that shrank their alien spell.

Then drifted, prone upon the devious main,
Whose billows warm
Plunged headlong with the wayward hurricane,
A fragile form
Untented to the elements that swayed the storm.

The shudder of the thunder-bolt amazed
The welkin wide;

And, as in dumb bewilderment I gazed,
The cloven tide
Upheaved its burthen, motionless, upon my side.

Ah! well-a-day! It was a maiden face,
A brow that shone
With the divine mortality and grace
That Death alone—
Pale sculptor!—graves in mockery on human stone!

"Art thou a child, sweet wanderer, of the sea,
Or earth, or air?
Whence comest thou," I marveled, "unto me?
What winged care
Pursues a pathless voyager, so heavenly fair?"

No voice—no motion—for the sea had done
Its deed of death;
The first pale victim to its vengeance won
With briny breath
The foam had stifled and the waves that writhe beneath!

Had I but tears! Alas! my bosom cold,
How rough to be
Her resting-place! No throb convulsive told
Its agony—
The dull imprisoned pain, unslaked, that wasted me!

And here she lay. The dewy twilight wept
Her woeful doom,

While the perpetual breezes fragrant kept
Her roofless tomb,
Whence meteors of the night dispelled sepulchral gloom.

And yonder light upon my summit set,
A beacon star,
Is tended of her watchful spirit yet,
That from afar
Warns the benighted sail that nears the harbor bar.

1882

QUATRAINS

NATURE

FLOWERS

THE DANDELION

With locks of gold to-day;
To-morrow, silver gray;
Then blossom-bald. Behold,
O man, thy fortune told!

July, 1892

REFLECTION

Like stars that in the waves below
With heaven's reflected splendor glow,
The flowers, in all their glory bright,
Are shadows of a fairer light.

1894

THE SNOWDROP

Behold, from winter's sleeping side
  The sacramental power
Of Nature fashioneth a bride
  As fair as Eden's flower.

Oct. 1892

PEACH BLOOM

A dream in fragrant silence wrought,
A blossoming of petaled thought,
A passion of these April days—
The blush of nature now betrays.

Feb. 1896

THE BEE AND THE BLOSSOMS

Why stand ye idle, blossoms bright,
The livelong summer day?
"Alas! we labor all the night
For what thou takest away!"

April, 1894

NEW AND OLD

New blossoms from the selfsame earth
Beneath the selfsame skies;
New hope with dawn's perennial birth
The selfsame heaven supplies.

May, 1896

A BLACKBERRY BUSH

Behold, above the hidden root
How white the bloom, how black the fruit!
Of Time, forever out of sight,
How bright the day, how dark the night!

1902

DAISIES

Peacemakers ye, the daisies, from the soil
Upbreathing wordless messages of love,
Soothing of earth-born brethren the toil
And lifting e'en the lowliest above.

MOON-FLOWERS

The summer night remembers
The morning glories slain,
And from the twilight embers
Recalls their ghosts again.

Nov. 1898

WIND FLOWERS

As whispers for a moment rest
Upon the brink of sound,
Here fragrant breezes blossom-drest,
Half-visible are found.

June, 1894

INFLUENCE

He cannot as he came depart—
The Wind that woos the Rose;
Her fragrance whispers in his heart
Wherever hence he goes.

Nov. 1897

SEED-TIME

When Trumpet-flowers begin to blow
The Thistle-downs take heed,
For then they know 'tis time to go
And plant the winged seed.

1899

BIRDS

THE LARK

He rose and singing passed from sight:
A shadow kindling with the sun,
His joy ecstatic flamed, till light
And heavenly song were one.

Aug. 1892

THE BLUEBIRD

'Tis thine the earliest song to sing
Of welcome to the wakening spring,
Who round thee, as a blossom, weaves
The fragrance of her sheltering leaves.

1894

TO A WOOD-ROBIN

Lo, where the blooming woodland wakes
From wintry slumbers long,
Thy heart, a bud of silence, breaks
To ecstasy of song.

1894

A PHONOGRAPH

Hark! what his fellow-warblers heard
And uttered in the light,
Their phonograph, the mocking-bird,
Repeats to them at night.

June, 1893

ARCHERY

A bow across the sky,
Another in the river
Whence swallows upward fly,
Like arrows from a quiver.

1899

DAY AND NIGHT

TO THE CRUCIFIX

Day after day the spear of morning bright
Pierces again the ever-wounded side,
Pointing at once the birthspring of the light,
And where for Love the Light Eternal died.

1897

FULFILMENT

No bloom forgotten but upon each face
The dews baptismal, and the selfsame sign
Of Night's communion that the fervid gaze
Of Paschal Morning changes into wine.

March, 1896

THE SUN

He prisons many a life indeed
Within the narrow cells of seed,
But cannot call them forth again
Without the sesame of rain.

April, 1893

THE SUNBEAM

A ladder from the land of light,
I rest upon the sod,
Whence dewy angels of the night
Climb back again to God.

Dec. 1892

THE POSTULANT

In ashes from the wasted fires of noon,
  Aweary of the light,
Comes Evening, a tearful novice, soon
  To take the veil of night.

Dec. 1893

LIGHT

We know thee not, save that when thou are gone,
  Thy sister, beauty, follows in thy train,
Leaving the soul in exile till the dawn
  Come with the gift of franchisement again.

1897

TO AN EVENING SHADE

O pilgrim, ever yearning for the east,
  What fate before thee lies?
"The spouse of Night, and, from the wedding feast,
  The Morning's sacrifice."

1897

IN DARKNESS

Dumb silence and her sightless sister sleep
Glide, mistlike, through the deepening vale of night;

Waking, where'er their shadowy garments sweep,
Dream-voices and an echoing dream of light.

Jan. 1891

THE VOYAGER

Columbus-like, I sailed into the night
The sunset gold to find;
Alas! 'twas but the phantom of the light!
Life's Indies lay behind!

1897

HEROES

Against the night, a champion bright,
The glow-worm, lifts a spear of light;
And, undismayed, the slenderest shade
Against the noonday bares a blade.

Feb. 1895

THE MID-DAY MOON

Behold, whatever wind prevail,
Slow westering a phantom sail—
The lonely soul of yesterday—
Unpiloted, pursues her way.

April, 1894

RENEWAL

Each Hagar month beholds her waning moon
Upon the desert night,
Like Ishmael, a famished wanderer, swoon
From darkness into light.

Dec. 1893

STARS

Behold, upon the field of night
Far-scattered seeds of golden light;
Nor one to wither, but anon
To bear the heaven-full harvest, dawn.

1894

BETRAYAL

"Whom I shall kiss," I heard a Sunbeam say,
"Take him and lead away!"
Then, with the Traitor's salutation, *"Hail!"*
He kissed the Dawn-Star pale.

Oct. 1902

ABASHED

The cock crows; and behold the hidden Day,
The thrice-denied, appears;
And Darkness, conscience-stricken, steals away,
His face bedewed with tears.

1910

THE DAWN STAR

Feed me, O morning, till the ray
That love hath kindled in the shade,
Lost in the satisfying day
Of light's perfection, fade.

1910

THE EXPECTED OF NATIONS

While shepherd stars their nightly vigils keep
Above the clouds of sleep,
Long prophesied, behold the manchild, morn,
Again is born.

1902

AT COCK-CROW

Crow! For the night has thrice denied
The glory of the sun,
And now, repentant, turns aside
To weep what he has done.

1899

SIGNALS

The prophet Star, the maiden Dawn, the Sun—
So light begins his reign;
Then Sunset, widowed Twilight, and anon
The prophet Star again.

July, 1904

TWILIGHT

Like Ruth, she follows where the reaper Day
Lets fall the slender shadows in her way;
Then, winnowing the darkness, home again,
She counts her golden grain.

Jan. 1889

DAY AND NIGHT

When Day goes down to meet the Night,
She welcomes him with many a light;
When Night comes up to meet the Day,
He drives her trooping stars away.

1902

THE RAIN-POOL

I am too small for winds to mar
My surface; but I hold a Star
That teaches me, though low my lot,
That highest heaven forgets me not.

1902

SEASONS

DECEMBER

Dull sky above, dead leaves below,
And hungry winds that whining go.
Like faithful hounds upon the track
Of one beloved that comes not back.

Dec. 1890

THE PRECURSOR

"As John of old before His face did go
To make the rough ways smooth, that all might know
The level road that leads to Bethlehem, lo,
I come," proclaims the snow.

1894

AUTUMN

Now at the aged year's decline
Behold the messenger divine
With love's celestial counter-sign,
The sacrament of bread and wine.

Sept. 1900

RELIGION

GOD'S LIKENESS

Not in mine own but in my neighbor's face
Must I Thine image trace;
Nor he in his but in the light of mine
Behold thy Face Divine.

April, 1894

MY MEDIATOR

"None betwixt God and me?"
"Behold, my neighbor, thee,
Unto His lofty throne
He makes my stepping-stone."

May, 1894

TO THE CHRIST

Thou hast on earth a Trinity—
Thyself, my fellow-man, and me;
When one with him, then one with Thee;
Nor save together Thine are we.

Jan. 1893

THE INCARNATION

Save through the flesh Thou wouldst not come to me—
The flesh, wherein Thy strength my weakness found
A weight to bow Thy Godhead to the ground,
And lift to heaven a lost humanity.

1894

THE PROMONTORY

Not all the range of sea-born liberty
Hath ever for one restless wave sufficed;
So pants the heart—of all compulsion free—
Self-driven to the Rock, its barrier, Christ.

March, 1893

CHRISTMAS

The womb of silence bears the Eternal Word,
And yet no sound is heard;
The womb of Mary, Virgin undefiled,
Mothers the heaven-born Child.

Dec. 1894

EASTER MORNING

Behold, the night of sorrow gone,
Like Magdalen the tearful dawn
Goes forth with love's anointing sweet
To kiss again the Master's feet!

1897

ON SEA AND LAND

One sobbing wave, above her fellows blest,
His feet caressed:
One homeless heart—the lone, unbidden guest—
Her God confessed.

Aug. 1895

HIDE-AND-SEEK

You hid your little self, dear Lord,
As other children do;
But oh, how great was their reward
Who sought three days for you!

1899

HELPLESSNESS

In patience as in labour must thou be
A follower of Me,
Whose hands and feet, when most I wrought for thee,
Were nailed unto a tree.

Dec. 1903

MY SERVANT

Lord, wheresoe'er I am, Thou art,
In love subservient to me,
Still tendering a lowlier port
Than saint or angel unto me.

Jan. 1903

AT SEA

Thy beauty fills each bubble-dome
Upon the waters wide:
So may it in Thy lowliest home—
My bosom—Lord, abide.

1902

POTTER'S FIELD

'Twas purchased with His blood, this holy ground,
This place of refuge for the homeless dead;
While He, alas! no spot secluded found
In all the world whereon to lay His head.

May, 1898

SON OF MARY

She the mother was of One—
Christ, her Saviour and her Son.
And another had she none?
Yea, her Love's beloved—John.

Dec. 1892

STABAT MATER

The star that in his splendor hid her own,
At Christ's Nativity,
Abides—a widowed satellite—alone,
On tearful Calvary.

Dec. 1892

THE CHRISTMAS BABE

So *small* that lesser lowliness
Must bow to worship or caress;
So *great* that heaven itself to know
Love's majesty must look below.

Jan. 1894

STABAT

Why, O my God, hast Thou forsaken me?
Not so my Mother; for behold and see,
She steadfast stands! O Father, shall it be
That *she* abides when Thou forsakest me?

April, 1900

GOOD FRIDAY

Behold in every crimson glow
  Of earth and sky and sea
The Hand that fashioned them doth show
  Love crucified for me.

UNIGENITUS

After the man-child morn,
Of night no babe is born;
After a God, no room
For man in Mary's womb.

1910

TRADITION

When home our blessed Lord was gone,
His mother lived alone with John;
For each had secrets to impart
That Love had taught them both *by heart.*

1899

"IS THY SERVANT A DOG?"

So *must* he be who in the crowded street,
Where shameless Sin and flaunting Pleasure meet,
Amid the noisome footprints finds the sweet
Faint vestige of Thy feet.

Sept. 1892

HOLY GROUND

Pause where apart the fallen sparrow lies,
And lightly tread;
For there the pity of a Father's eyes
Enshrines the dead.

Oct. 1892

MY NEIGHBOR

My neighbor as myself to love,
Thou hast commanded me,
And in obedience I prove
That Thou Thyself art he.

1910

IN AETERNUM

If Life and Death be things that seem,
If Death be sleep, and Life a dream,
May not the everlasting sleep
The dream of life eternal keep?

April, 1906

ST. THERESA AND THE CHILD

"Who art thou, son?" The little stranger smiled,
"And who art thou?" Whereto she made reply,
"Theresa I of Jesus am, my child."
He—radiant—"Jesus of Theresa I."

1899

PERSONS

TO THE BABE NIVA

Niva, Child of Innocence,
Dust to dust *we* go;
Thou, when winter wooed thee hence,
Wentest snow to snow.

1894

MILTON

So fair thy vision that the night
Abided with thee, lest the light,
A flaming sword before thine eyes,
Had shut thee out from Paradise.

Dec. 1885

FATHER DAMIEN

O God, the cleanest offering
Of tainted earth below,
Unblushing to thy feet we bring—
"A leper white as snow!"

May, 1889

BEETHOVEN AND ANGELO

One made the surging sea of tone
Subservient to his rod;
One from the sterile womb of stone
Raised children unto God.

March, 1894

LANIER'S FLUTE

When palsied at the pool of thought
The Poet's words were found,
Thy voice the healing Angel brought
To touch them into sound.

1897

POE-CHOPIN

O'er each the soul of beauty flung
A shadow mingled with the breath
Of music that the Sirens sung,
Whose utterance is death.

Dec. 1895

TO AN EXILE

As still upon the prophet shone
A light, when God himself was gone,
So lives, unbanished from thine eyes,
The splendor of thy native skies.

Nov. 1892

TO A DYING BABE

O bubble, break! All heaven thou hast
Unsullied in thy heart!
Ere time its shadow on thee cast
Love calls thee to depart.

Oct. 1895

POE'S COTTAGE AT FORDHAM

Here, where to pinching penury the gloom
Of Death was wedded, came Immortal Love,
And Genius with all the pomp thereof
To consecrate a temple and a tomb.

May, 1897

VICTORIA

Now from the throne of England one is borne,
Whom all men mourn,
Nor more as queen than for the life that stood
The type of Motherhood.

Jan. 1901

JACET LEO XIII

"Behold the aged Lion, Lord,
I am,
Now come to lay me down
Beside the Lamb."

Aug. 1903

ALFRED TENNYSON

The lordliest at Arthur's Table Round
No loftier than thou,
The laureate, with England's glory crowned,
Whom death has knighted now.

Nov. 1892

TO THE ROSE-TREE FROM OMAR'S GRAVE PLANTED AT FITZGERALD'S

Alike from alien lips one music flows
To flush the Orient Rose,
Far-sundered spirits finding each in her
His dream's interpreter.

Sept. 1896

EXCLUDED

Into the charnel hall of fame
The dead alone should go.
Then write not there the living name
Of Edgar Allan Poe.

HIS MISSION

'Twas not for gain of glittering gold he trod
Alaska's frozen loin;
Nay, but the superscription of their God
On colder hearts to coin!

PERSONAL

ANGELS OF PAIN

Ah, should they come revisiting the spot
Whence by our prayers we drove them utterly,
Shame were it for their saddened eyes to see
How soon their visitations are forgot.

1894

O'ERSPENT

My soul is as a fainting noonday star,
And thou, the absent night;
Haste, that thy healing shadow from afar
May touch me into light.

1894

THE SHADOW

O shadow, in thy fleeting form I see
The friend of fortune that once clung to me.
In flattering light thy constancy is shown;
In darkness thou wilt leave me all alone.

Dec. 1885

AN APRIL PRAYER

Lord, to thy signal-light the trees
  In leaf and flower reply;
Let not my heart, more dull than these,
  Alone unwakened lie.

April, 1896

TENEBRAE

Whate'er my darkness be,
'Tis not, O Lord, of Thee.
The light is Thine alone;
The shadows, all my own.

Nov. 1895–Feb. 1896

THE CYNOSURE

So let me in thy heaven of thought appear
  As doth a twilight star—
The harbinger of tenderest hopes anear
  And memories afar.

1897

ADRIFT

The calm horizon circles only me,
The centre of its measureless embrace—
A bubble on the bosom of the sea,
Itself a bubble in the bound of space.

Dec. 1895

MY SECRET

'Tis not what I am fain to hide
That doth in deepest darkness dwell,
But what my tongue hath often tried,
Alas, in vain to tell.

March, 1896

IN ABSENCE

All that thou art not, makes not up the sum
Of what thou art, beloved, unto me;
All other voices, wanting thine, are dumb;
All vision, in thine absence, vacancy.

1897

A REMONSTRANCE

Sing me no more, sweet warbler, for the dart
Of joy is keener than the flash of pain;
Sing me no more, for the re-echoed strain
Together with the silence breaks my heart.

May, 1896

SUBMISSION

Since to my smiting enemy
Thou biddest me be meek,
Lo, gladlier, my God, to Thee
I turn the other cheek.

SLEEPLESSNESS

Sleep quiets all but me,
A desert isle unsolaced by the sea—
A Tantalus denied
The draught wherewith all thirst is satisfied.

June, 1893

PROXIMITY

The day is nearer to the night
Than to another day;
If closer to the Living Light,
In darkness let me stay.

1910

THE SMITER

They bound Thine eyes and questioned, "Tell us now
Who smote Thee." Thou wast silent. When to-day
Mine eyes are holden, and again they say,
"Who smote Thee?" Lord, I tell them it is Thou.

1910

DEPARTURE

Go now thy way, but whereso'er thou art,
If sick again for home,
Know that the place forsaken in my heart
Is vacant till thou come.

1910

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF VIRGINIA

Nurtured upon my mother's knee,
From this her mountain-breast apart,
Here nearer heaven I seem to be
And closer to her heart.

1902

MISCELLANEOUS

"FOR THE RAIN IT RAINETH EVERY DAY"

Aye, every day the rain doth fall,
And every day doth rise;
'Tis thus the heavens incessant call,
And thus the earth replies.

Nov. 1892

THE MAST

The winds that once my playmates were
No more my voice responsive hear,
Nor know me, naked now and dumb,
When o'er my wandering way they come.

Nov. 1892

A STONE'S THROW

Lo, Death another pebble far doth fling
Into the midmost sea,
To leave of Life an ever-widening ring
Upon Eternity.

1894

LOVE'S AUTOGRAPH

Once only did he pass my way.
"When wilt thou come again?
Ah, leave some token of thy stay!"
He wrote (and vanished) "Pain."

Sept. 1892

PREJUDICE

A leaf may hide the largest star
From love's uplifted eye;
A mote of prejudice out-bar
A world of charity.

Oct. 1892

THE BUBBLE

Why should I stay? Nor seed nor fruit have I.
But, sprung at once to beauty's perfect round,
Nor loss, nor gain, nor change in me is found—
A life-complete in death-complete to die.

Oct. 1891

IMAGINATION

Here fancy far outdoes the deed;
So hath eternity the need
Of telling more than time has taught
To fill the boundaries of thought.

Sept. 1893

RUIN

A power beyond perfection's dream is thine—
A shadow that the dwindling shape outgrows
Of substance, like a vast horizon-line
Receding as the fancy onward goes.

1894

BECALMED

The bar is crossed; but death—the pilot—stands
In seeming doubt before the tranquil deep,
The fathom-line still trembling in his hands,
As when upon the treacherous shoals of sleep.

1894

TO THE SPHINX

Ah, not alone in Egypt's desert land
  Thy dwelling-place apart!
But wheresoe'er the scorching passion-sand
  Hath seared the human heart.

Sept. 1892

DISCREPANCY

One dream the bird and blossom dreamed
  Of love the whole night long;
Yet twain its revelation seemed
  In fragrance and in song.

April, 1893

POETRY

A gleam of heaven; the passion of a star
  Held captive in the clasp of harmony;
A silence, shell-like, breathing from afar
  The rapture of the deep—eternity.

July–Aug. 1892

THE PYRAMIDS

Amid the desert of a mystic land,
  Like Sibyls waiting for a doom far-seen,
Apart in awful solitude they stand,
  With thought's unending caravan between.

Dec. 1892

SAP

Strong as the sea and silent as the grave,
  It ebbs and flows unseen;
Flooding the earth—a fragrant tidal wave—
  With mist of deepening green.

1894

SLEEP

What art thou, balmy sleep?
"Foam from the fragrant deep
Of silence, hither blown
From the hushed waves of tone."

Sept. 1892

FORMATION

Whate'er we love becomes of us a part;
The centre of all tributary powers—
Our life is fed from nature's throbbing heart,
And of her best the fibred growth is ours.

1894

WHISPER

Close cleaving unto silence, into sound
She ventures as a timorous child from land,
Still glancing, at each step, around,
Lest suddenly she lose her sister's hand.

Sept. 1893

ALTER EGO

Thou art to me as is the sea
Unto the shell:
A life whereof I breathe, a love
Wherein I dwell.

Dec. 1892

ESTRANGEMENT

What kindly absence hid, forsooth,
Thy presence late hath shown:
That, like a garment worn in youth,
I am, alas, outgrown!

April, 1894

STILLING THE TEMPEST

'Twas all she could:—The gift that Nature gave,
The torrent of her tresses, did she spill
Before His feet; and lo, the troubled wave
Of passion heard His whisper, "Peace, be still!"

April, 1895

PURGATORY

How long, O Lord, how long
These penal fires among?
Till love with fiercer flame
The strength of torture tame.

1897

WOMAN

Shall she come down and on our level stand?
Nay, God forbid it! May a mother's eyes—
Love's earliest home, the heaven of babyland—
Forever bend above us as we rise.

April, 1896

OPPORTUNITY

Once only did the angel stir
The pool, whereat she paused in pain.
Another step outspeeded her;
The waters ne'er have moved again.

March, 1897

LIFE

The power that lifts the leaf above
  And sends the root below
Sustains the heart in brother-love
  And makes it heavenward grow.

Nov. 1895

DEATH

So sweet to tired mortality the night
  Of life's laborious day,
That God himself, o'erwearied of the light,
  Within its shadow lay.

Nov. 1894

RELEASE

So long am I a prisoner
As time and thought surround me here;
When time is dead, and memory
Deserts the ramparts, I am free.

Sept. 1895

SILENCE

A sea wherein the rivers of all sound
Their streams incessant pour,
But whence no tide returning e'er hath found
An echo on the shore.

Aug. 1894

FANCY

A boat unmoored, wherein a dreamer lies,
The slumberous waves low-lisping of a land
Where love, forever with unclouded eyes,
Goes, wed with wandering music, hand in hand.

1897

FAME

Their noonday never knows
What names immortal are;
'Tis night alone that shows
How star surpasseth star.

Sept. 1894

TIME'S LEGACY

The night so long to grief,
The day to joy so brief,
What shall eternity
To each, unaltered, be!

1897

A CRISIS

O leaf, against the twilight seen,
Move not; for at thy side
Gleams, trembling lest thou intervene,
My hope, my star, my guide.

1897

RESISTANCE

Resistance to its pinions light
Uplifts the bird in airy flight;
Resistance to the winged soul
Uplifts it to the lofty goal.

Jan. 1892

THE BILLOWS

Of tribes that in the desert fell
The wandering souls are we—
Wind-scattered seed of Ishmael
Upon the sterile sea.

Jan. 1896

DEEP UNTO DEEP

Where limpid waters lie between
There only heaven to heaven is seen;
Where flows the tide of mutual tears
There only heart to heart appears.

Aug. 1894

VESTIGES

Upon the isle of time we trace
The signs of many a vanished race;
But on the sea that laps it round
No memory of man is found.

1897

BONE-CASTANETS

Apart, of death and silence we,
The fittest emblems found,
Together, mad with minstrelsy,
Leap into life and sound.

1897

THE FIG-TREE

First go-between in fallen man's defence,
To shield or share his blame.
Christ-like, to lend the robe of innocence
Wherewith to hide his shame.

1897

MOUNT EVEREST

As in the furnace fared the holy feet,
Unblemished by the sevenfold fervor, so,
Nearest the sun, cold-whitening in heat,
Is thine eternal chastity of snow.

Oct. 1894

NATURE

It is His garment; and to them
Who touch in faith its utmost hem
He, turning, says again, "I see
That virtue hath gone out of me."

Feb. 1909

COBWEBS

A net to catch the earliest gleam
Of westward swimming light;
Or hammock of the latest dream
That left the shores of night.

Dec. 1894

AUTUMN-GLOW

If this the preface be of death
  In crimson, green, and gold,
What wondrous art illumineth
  The story still untold?

Nov. 1900

THE PRECIPICE

Above the fathomed deep
Of Death, we move in sleep,
And who among us knows
How near the brink he goes?

Dec. 1898

DARIEN

Thou partest sea from restless lover-sea
  That, yearning, dream and wait
The wedding of the waters, soon to be,
  When Science opens the gate.

Feb. 1901

LOSS

For one extinguished light
Of Love, all heaven is night;
For one frail flower the less,
The world a wilderness.

Jan. 1909

NOMADS

We are but pilgrims; and the skin
That covers us, the tent wherein,
Awake or sleeping, we abide
Till death a dwelling-house provide.

1910

TEARS

Out of the deep are we,
Out of that inland sea
Whereof the briny wave
Beats to the yawning grave.

1910

TO A DROP OF POISON

As once, the seal of Solomon beneath,
The genius in bonds, rebellious lay;
So lieth here a mightier captive death,
Fate-bound his fond deliverer to slay.

UNDERTOW

In boreal calm the spirit feels
A far-off thunder-roll,
And through each tropic passion steals
A current from the pole.

Oct. 1897

THE WANDERER

For one astray, behold
The Master leaves the ninety and the nine,
Nor rests till, love-controlled,
The Discord moves in Harmony divine.

July, 1895

WRINKLES

This, biting Frost—this, branding Sun—
This, Wind or drenching Rain hath done;
Each perfecting the Sculptor's plan
Upon the godlike image, Man.

Nov. 1903

THE LATEST-BORN

The world had waited till thy soul
From nothingness was needed here,
To make upon the mystic scroll
Of Life the context clear.

Oct. 1894

BEAUTY

She sleeps, her hiding-place unknown
To other worshippers,
Till Art, her lover, comes alone
To press his lips to hers.

1910

NOTICE!

The people read it as they pass:
"On Penalty, Keep off the Grass!"
But from their graves how long, alas,
Will memory keep off the grass?

1902

DAVID AND GOLIATH

One word of well-directed wit,
A pebble-jest, has often hit
A boastful evil and prevailed
Where many a nobler weapon failed.

1902

THE SHADOW

At sunrise he's a giant tall;
At noon he's withered, lean, and small.
At sunset he regains his height
And covers all the land at night.

1902

DECORATORS

All men the painter Youth engage;
And *some*, the famous sculptor, Age.

1902

HUMOROUS VERSE

FOOT-SOLDIERS [1]

'Tis all the way to Toe-town,
  Beyond the Knee-high hill,
That Baby has to travel down
  To see the soldiers drill.

One, two, three, four, five, a-row—
  A captain and his men—
And on the other side, you know,
  Are six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

THE BABY'S STAR

The star that watched you in your sleep
  Has just put out his light.
"Good-day, to you on earth," he said,
  "Is here in heaven Good-night.

"But tell the Baby when he wakes
  To watch for my return;
For I'll hang out my lamp again
  When his begins to burn."

[1] All the poems from *Foot-Soldiers* to *The Pleiads* were published in 1899.

JACK FROST'S APOLOGY

To strip you of your foliage
My spirit sorely grieves;
Nor will I in the work engage
Unless you grant your leaves.

A CAVALCADE

"Thistle-down, Thistle-down, whither away?
Will you not longer abide?"
"Nay, we have wedded the winds to-day,
And home with the rovers we ride."

SILK

'Twas the shroud of many a worm-like thing
That rose from its tangled skein;
'Twas the garb of many a god-like king
Who went to the worms again.

SLEEP

When he is a little chap,
We call him *Nap*.
When he somewhat older grows,
We call him *Doze*.
When his age by hours we number,
We call him Slumber.

THE FIRE-FLY

"Are you flying through the night
  Looking where to find me?"
"Nay, I travel with a light
  For the folks *behind* me."

THE DRAGON-FLY

"Is skimming o'er a stagnant pool
  Your only occupation?"
"Ah, no; 'tis at this summer school
  I get my education."

CATS

They fought like demons of the night
  Beneath a shrunken moon,
And all the roof at dawn of light
  With *fiddle-strings* was strewn.

AN INSECTARIAN

"I cannot wash my dog," she said,
  "Nor touch him with a comb,
For fear the fleas upon him bred
  May find no other home."

THE SQUIRREL

Who combs you, little Squirrel?
And do you twist and twirl
When some one puts the papers on
To keep your tail in curl?

And must you see the dentist
For every tooth you break?
And are you apt from eating nuts
To get the stomach-ache?

HOSPITALITY

Said a Snake to a Frog with a wrinkled skin,
"As I notice, dear, that your dress is thin,
And a *rain* is coming, I'll take you in."

BICYCLES! TRICYCLES!

Bicycles! Tricyles! Nay, to shun laughter,
Try cycles first, and *buy* cycles after;
For surely the buyer deserves but the worst
Who would buy cycles, failing to try cycles first.

HIGH AND LOW

A Boot and a Shoe and a Slipper
Lived once in a Cobbler's row;
  But the Boot and the Shoe
  Would have nothing to do
With the Slipper, because she was low.

But the king and the queen and their daughter
On the Cobbler chanced to call;
  And as neither the Boot
  Nor the Shoe would suit
The Slipper went off to the ball.

DOCTOR TUMBLE-BUG

  With wondrous skill
  He works until,
To suit himself, he makes it
  A patent pill,
  To cure or kill
The sufferer that takes it.

CLOSE QUARTERS

Little toe, big toe, three toes between,
  All in a pointed shoe!
Never was narrower forecastle seen
  Nor so little room for the crew.

THE TIME-BROOD

I wonder how the mother-Hour
  Can feed each hungry Minute,
And see that every one of them
  Gets sixty seconds in it;
And whether, when she goes abroad,
  She knows which ones attend her;
For all of them are just alike
  In age and size and gender.

PAINS-TAKING

Take pains," growled the Tooth to the Dentist;
"The same," said the Dentist, "to you."
  Then he added, "No doubt,
  Before you are out
You'll have taken most pains of the two."

A RUB

'Twixt handkerchief and nose
A difference arose;
And a tradition goes
That they settled it by blows.

FROG-MAKING

Said Frog papa to Frog mamma,
"Where is our little daughter?"
Said Frog mamma to Frog papa,
"She's underneath the water."

Then down the anxious father went,
And there, indeed, he found her,
A-tickling tadpoles, till they kicked
Their tails off all around her.

THE TREE-FROG PEDIGREE

Our great ancestor, Polly Wog,
With her cousin, Thaddeus Pole,
Eloped from her home in an Irish bog,
And crossing the sea on the "Mayflower's" log,
At the risk of body and soul,
Married a Frog; and thus, you see,
How we come by a place in the family-tree
And the family name, Tree-frog.

AN EXPLANATION

To the young lady toad said her mother,
"How had you the boldness, my dear,
To propose to Miss Pollywog's brother?"
"Why, mamma," she replied, "'tis leap year!"

THE PARLOR AND THE FLY

"Will you walk into the Spider?"
Said the Parlor to the Fly;
"He's the emptiest little spider
That ever you did spy.

"And he covers me with cobweb;
So I want you to go in;
For—his lower chamber furnished—
He will have no room to spin."

NO GO

Said a simpering Butterfly, sipping a rose,
To a graceless Mosquito on grandpapa's nose,
Whom she hoped to entrap,
"Pray come, Sir, and taste of this delicate stuff."
"Thanks, Madam, I'm just now taking my snuff,"
Quoth the impudent chap.

A MOUSE, A CAT, AND AN IRISH BULL

A little mouse nibbled a Limburger cheese,
And back to his bedchamber stole,
Whence never again was he destined to squeeze,
For the smell was too large for the hole.

And a pussy cat, passing, instinctively stood,
For her appetite urged her to try it;
But she answered her stomach that grumbled for food,
"I should die if I lived on such diet."

THE SAME WITH A DIFFERENCE

When first they wed he was a sing-er,
And much delight his songs did bring her;
But nowadays he proves a sin-ger,
And makes it hot for her as ginger.

AN INCONVENIENCE

To his cousin the Bat
Squeaked the envious Rat,
"How fine to be able to fly!"
Tittered she, "Leather wings
Are convenient things;
But nothing *to sit on* have I."

THE TRYST

Potato was deep in the dark under ground,
  Tomato, above in the light.
The little Tomato was ruddy and round,
  The little Potato was white.

And redder and redder she rounded above,
  And paler and paler he grew,
And neither suspected a mutual love
  Till they met in a Brunswick stew.

ETIQUETTE

"I long," said the new-gathered Lettuce,
"To meet our illustrious guest."
Cried the Caster, "Such haste
Is in very bad taste:
See first that you're properly *dressed*."

A SUNSTROKE

The Sun courted Water,
Earth's loveliest daughter,
And strove to abduct her in vain:
For, when he had caught her,
And to the clouds brought her,
Home she came running in rain.

A SHUFFLE

There was a rumpus in the Pack,
Whereof the King and Queen and Jack
Were playing knavish parts.
On Club and Spade was put the blame;
But these asserted 'twas a game
Of Diamonds and Hearts.

WASHINGTON'S RUSE

When Georgie would not go to bed,
If some one asked him why,

"What is the use?" he gravely said,
"You know I cannot lie."

PANIC

It struck the signs of the Zodiac,
Around the immovable Man
Who stands in front of the Almanack
To show his interior plan.

The Scorpion attacked the Bull,
The Bull aroused the Lion;
The Crab by their tails
Flung the Fish in the Scales,
Where they floundered as on a gridiron;
The Billy Goat went for the Gemini twins;
The Ram made a rush at Aquarius;
And a *narrow* escape had the Virgo's shins
From the shaft of her beau Sagittarius.

THE END OF IT

A whole-tail dog, and a half-tail dog,
And a dog without a tail,
Went all three out on an autumn day
To follow a red-fox trail.

But the dogs that carried their tails along
Fell out, it is said, by the way;

And the loss of a tail and a half at the end
Of the dogs put an end to the fray.

When each, as a morsel sweet, gulped down
What had late been a neighbor's pride,
"You've kept your tails," laughed the no-tail dog,
"But you wear them now *inside*."

THE WOODPECKER

The wizard of the woods is he;
For in his daily round,
Where'er he finds a rotting tree,
He makes the timber sound.

BUTTERFLY

Butterfly, Butterfly, sipping the sand,
Have you forgotten the flowers of the land?
Or are you so sated with honey and dew
That sand-filtered water tastes better to you?

A SPY

Sighed the languid Moon to the Morning Star:
"O little maid, how late you are!"

"I couldn't rise from my couch," quoth she,
"While the Man-in-the-Moon was looking at me."

A LAMENT

"O Lady Cloud, why are you weeping?" I said.
"Because," she made answer, "my rain-beau is dead."

THE TAX-GATHERER

"And pray, who are you?"
Said the violet blue
To the Bee, with surprise
At his wonderful size,
In her eye-glass of dew.

"I, Madam," quoth he,
"Am a publican Bee,
Collecting the tax
On honey and wax.
Have you nothing for me?"

JACK-O-LANTERN

"Jack-o'-Lantern, Jack-o'-Lantern,
Tell me where you hide by day?"
"In the cradle where the vapors
Dream the sunlit hours away."

"Jack-o'-Lantern, Jack-o'-Lantern,
Who rekindles you at night?"
"Any firefly in the meadow
Lends a Jack-o'-Lantern light."

THE PLEIADS

"Who are ye with clustered light,
Little Sisters seven?"
"Crickets, chirping all the night
On the hearth of heaven."

A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE

This is the way to Lullaby Town,
To Lullaby Town, to Lullaby Town—
First go up, and then go down;
This is the way to Lullaby Town.

Folks that go to Lullaby Town,
To Lullaby Town, to Lullaby Town—
Travel each in a snow-white gown;
This is the dress for Lullaby Town.

Dreams have homes in Lullaby Town,
In Lullaby Town, in Lullaby Town—

Dreams that *smile,* for never a frown
Enters the gates of Lullaby Town.

March, 1900

SUBWAY THEOLOGY

Bishop Potter, finding hotter
  Passions than there used to be,
To the Gospel bids defiance,
And appeals to modern science
  For the remedy.

Saint and devil on a level
  Walked of late where all men saw;
But the wise, by his example,
Travel now a subway ample,
  Paved with fragments of the law.

Here this up-to-date instructor
Gives each clerical conductor
  Transfers for the nuptial route,
So that they who feel the folly
Of the matrimonial trolley
  May, at will, get out.

THE MESSAGE

Let every South American beware, for lo! the strenuous man, our sovereign lord and master, says:

Unless you quickly mend your ways,
Upon your bended necks you'll feel
The impression of my armed heel,
A thing that every Filipino
Has learned as thoroughly as we know.

J. B. T.

On President Roosevelt's message to Congress, December, 1904.

THE UNITED STATES TO THE FILIPINOS

We come to give you liberty
To do whate'er *we* choose,
Or clean extermination
If you venture to refuse.

A HIGH FLIER

There once were two brothers named Wright
Who went up in aerial flight;
But a poet I know
Who much higher did go,
For he soared until "clean out of sight."

"VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE"

Contrasts are striking, Teddy knows;
And so, for a variety,

The Black man to the White House goes,
  Rough-riding o'er society.
We wonder how "the spice of life"
Impressed the *daughter* and the *wife*.

KEEP YOUR RYE OPEN

No man, dear doctor, can deny
Your rhymes are worthy of your Rye.
  And this to me
Is what in spirits best I find—
Or in a jug, or in mankind—
  Viz., Pure-Rye-ty.

A TABB-LOW

(*A duet by two who can't do it—D——and B——*)

"Tabb's dead! and we who always keep
The Rule of Silence when we *sleep*,
Agreed, for his detested sake,
To keep it sometimes when *awake*,
So that his students all might see
What lofty scorn of him had we."

D. "Go now, and get your 'little ting,'
And we shall both *Te Deum* sing."

B. "Te Deum!"

D. "Hush! The chant you spoil
And mispronounce the second *voil.*
Tee D*y*um you should say, like me."

B. "Now den, you don't know *Fa* and *Si.*"

D. "Ah, B—— ——, keep your temper, do,
Or Silence I shall keep with you.
Look there! I'll take my solemn oath
Tabb's body's grinning at us both."

REPLY TO AN INVITATION

St. Peter is the cornerstone;
And if you build on Paul,
I greatly fear
Ere many a year
Your church is doomed to fall.

So, pray excuse, if I refuse
To heed your invitation,
And have no heart
To take a part
In such a Mackination.

MYSELF

"This is the Catholic priest
Who in piety never increased.
With the world and the devil
He kept on a level,
Though from *flesh* he was wholly released."

THE BEECHER BEACHED

Were Harriet Beecher well aware
Of what was done in Delaware,
Of that unwholesome smellaware,
She'd make all heaven or hell aware,
And ask John Brown to tell her where
Henceforth she best might sell her ware."

REPLY

"Who would think on
A rebel with Lincoln?
Or venture to ask a
Friend to Nebraska!
Another might dare it,
But I cannot, Barrett,
Though truly to thee
A friend, J. B. T.

THE HONEY-BEE

O Bee, good-by!
Your weapon's gone,
And you anon
Are doomed to die;
But death to you can bring
No second sting.

1899

THE FIRST EDITION

Sighed the Book, "I am bound to be read,
But though on the shelf others put me
Till they know what the critics have said,
My friends are the first that will cut me."

1902

A FOOT-RULE

When a poet gives his *hand,*
Meet it is to greet the greeter.
When his *feet* in question stand,
It is *metre.*

May, 1902

REPLY

It is a cruel stab
With Edgar Poe to measure Tabb:
As well with Tennyson to rate
The present Poet Laureate.

EXPLANATION

'Tis evident that such a name
As mine to Mr. Dobson came,
Like Cinderella's shoe—it fit
The foot; so, on he buckled it.

Feb. 1899

A CONFESSION

One day with foot upon the ground,
I stood among the crowd;
The next, with sole renewed, I found
A footing on "The Cloud."

March, 1899

DOING WELL

I'll be hanged if you haven't done well
To hang up a rebel who likes to rebel;
But whether you send me to heaven or hell,
An unredeemed rebel I'll faithfully dwell.

A PROBLEM IN MATHEMATICS

Suspended o'er geometry,
  I am a fish-worm dangling—
A creature too obtruse to see
  What is acute in angling.

AN INTERVIEW

I sat with chill December
  Beside the evening fire.
"And what do you remember,"
  I ventured to inquire,

"Of seasons long forsaken?"
He answered in amaze,
"My age you have mistaken;
I've lived but thirty days."

Jan. 1896

THE DIFFERENCE

Unc' Si, de Holy Bible say,
In speakin' of de jus',
Dat he do fall seben times a day;
Now, how's de sinner wuss?

"Well, chile de slip may come to all,
But den de diff'ence foller;
For, if you watch him when he fall,
De jus' man do not *waller.*"

UNREVISED POSTHUMOUS POEMS

(First printed in the Editor's book—*Father Tabb—A Study of His Life and Works*—The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore.)

THE BROWNE-TABB ALBUM

THE MINIATURE

I know not whence, but on the morning air
A ghastly whisper pales my waking cheek;
A shudder in its warning seems to speak,
"Beware!"

I woke: the wind at intervals,
A mournful vigil kept,
As o'er a sepulchre, around
The chamber where I slept.
The casement rattled in the blast,
The breathing curtains stirred;
Anon, throughout their shroudy length,
A stifled sigh was heard—
A brooding dread, low whispering
In mystic monotone—
"It was a deed of darkness,
And in the darkness done."

Again at noon, but thinner, faintlier, there,
As spent with vigil, heaves a stifled sigh
(I turn to see; but nothing meets the eye)
"Beware!"

The pallor of a wasted lamp,
  A fitful glimmer flung
Athwart a miniature above
  The sculptured mantel hung,
Where gleams of melancholy light,
  With conscious shadows wrought
Upon the lineaments portrayed
  A malady of thought—
A dim-remembered agony,
  Interpreting the tone—
"It was a deed of darkness,
  And in the darkness done!"

At twilight grim, in nature's dumb despair,
As swoops the prowling darkness of the day,
Throbs, in a sudden torment of dismay,
  "Beware!"

Aghast, I listened, motionless,
  When lo! a chilling sound—
The vague pulsation of a heart
  Beneath a mortal wound—
And from the picture quivering,
  As smitten wan with pain
Dark, stormy drops fell suddenly
  As a reluctant rain:
And still the moaning monody
  Rhymed on in undertone—
"It was a deed of darkness
  And in the darkness done."

At midnight, like an incantation drear,
The hollow tide in broken thunder-tone
Sobs, with the beating of my heart, a groan,
"Beware!"

The spectral eyes drooped languidly,
The hand convulsive clung,
The bell of midnight clashed the hour
With stern prophetic tongue;
Then, all was blank—oblivious
In icy calm I lay—
The morning whitened to behold
My raven tresses gray;
And beats forever on my brain
The throbbing monotone—
"It was a deed of darkness
And in the darkness done."

Thus, as a strain bewildered, everywhere,
The trooping echoes of a formless fear,
Like startled phantoms, flock upon my ear,
"Beware!"

RUIN

It stands like Night,
The sepulchre of a departed light,
Whose glory gone,

Each hoary vestige chronicles
Of crumbling stone.

The portal now,
A broken arch majestic, as a brow
O'er Evening's eye,
Catches an azure glimpse beyond
Of fading sky.

On either hand,
Grim sentinels, the lofty turrets stand,
With many a scar
Of Time and tameless Elements
That wage his war.

The windows tall
Stare blindly from the ivy-shagged wall
Of massive power,
Stern as the eyeless Nazarite
In Gaza's tower.

O'er shattered frieze,
O'er buried plinth and capital, the breeze
That wanders by,
Woos the rank weed, low answering
Its plaintive sigh.

Time was, when one,
Mild as a maiden star to look upon,
Of pensive mood,

Here wrought a destiny obscure
In solitude.

Vague phantoms wove,
About her being, sympathies that move
To subtle thought—
Seraphic reveries that lure
The soul distraught,

Unto her mind
The melting moonlight and the moving wind,
The molten gleam
Of starry beacons jewelling
The limpid stream;

The sheen and shade
Of waking dawn and drowsy twilight made—
Each multiform
Design of earth and ocean,
Calm and storm—

Spake mysteries,
Revealing all the harmony that lies
In things we see;
Of life and death, the tides of joy
And misery.

So grew her soul,
Enamored of the spirits that control

The universe,
That powers beyond the visible
Communed with hers,

And each became
The warder of a consecrated flame;
As angels high
O'ershadowing the crystal shrine
Of Chastity.

But light, alas!
As to the stainless dewdrops in the grass,
A fatal gleam
Smote of its own satiety
The splendid dream;

And swift as fire,
Doom-driven to the wanton wind's desire
A hurricane
Of howling desolation leaped
The cloistered brain,

Wild as the woe
That rends the womb of Nature in the throes
Of mountain-birth,
Shuddered the dome celestial
And startled Earth,

With Echoes torn
From raping wrath and agonies of scorn—

A demon cry—
Lost in this dark contending cloud
Of Destiny.

The curse was past;
A sullen vapor silently o'ercast
The naked Night,
Till Ruin, hideous with Morn,
Appalled the sight.

THE GHOST CHAMBER

Into the lonely room,
Spawning an icy gloom,
Lost in a wandering swoon
Gloats the wide-horned moon.

Silent the shadows gray
Shrink from her touch away,
Loathing her leprous light
Spotting the robe of Night,
Moulting a hoary gloom
Over a haunted room.

Cometh no whisper there:
Spasms of dank despair
Curdle the echoes round,

Stifling the birth of sound
In the grim charnel-womb
Of the deserted room.

Stark are the staring walls,
Like unto lidless balls—
Domes of departed sleep—
Doomed evermore to keep
Watch o'er the prisoned gloom
Of the forsaken room.

CHOPIN

Soul, that in music, as a flower in light,
Didst gem and bloom and vanish with a breath
That mist-like o'er the sullen tide of death
Keeps fragrant still the memory of thy flight;
Dost thou, immortal, on the topmost height
Of harmony, forget the world beneath
And all its chords tumultuous? Wandereth
No echo upwards through the sundering night?
Aye, notes of thine own making, now forlorn,
Like fledglings fluttered from the nest of love,
Tell of thy care, while with harmonious wing
They fan the depths of silence, listening
To hear anon thy mandate from above,
Hence to their home, thy bosom, to return.

DISTANCE

Fair sorceress, upon thy calm domain
We gaze in ceaseless wonder, compassed round
By slow-expanding visions interwound
With phantasies of pleasure, hope, and pain.
In thee life's wearied echoes find again
A silent fold: in thee each herald sound,
As in an Ocean's slumberous depth profound,
Awaits the future and her shadowy train.
All hearts the mild enchantment of thy sway
Subdues to subtlest sympathies benign—
To thee the golden Present, day by day,
For some far-glittering idol we resign,
And, like to exiles, homeward journeying, say:
"Our sighs, our dreams, our longings, all are thine."

THE INDIAN

Still westward with the lessening light ye go,
Dejected people, and the forests tall,
Bewidowed of their dusky children, fall
Behind you with an echoing wail of woe.
Year after year the warrior winds lay low
The leafy tribes, and with prophetic call
Denounce the silent massacre of all
Before the pale usurper's conquering bow.

Heed ye the signs? or look your longing eyes
Beyond the winter, where the selfsame voice,
Warm with the breath of unawakened flowers,
Comes softly singing to the world, "Rejoice!
The snow is gone: and with the April showers
Each buried seed is hastening to rise!"

PREMONITION

As when at Mary's voice Elizabeth
Felt in her womb the restlessness of feet
That would outrun delaying birth, and greet
Alike unseen the Conqueror of Death:
So, at the hour of midnight wakes a breath
That in the womb of darkness moves to meet
The soul of Morning, and a silence sweet
As incense tells of one that worshippeth.
Yea, life forever in expectancy
Stands tip-toe on the utmost brink of time,
Hushing the past, and listening to hear
(As poets the inevitable rhyme)
A dream's fulfilment in the echoes clear
That sing the present in futurity.

THE SCORE

This is the chart that tells of one who went,
Like John, into the wilderness alone—

Into a land of Silence, all unknown
Till thither by the Muses he was sent.
And we upon his wanderings intent
Must mark his perilous footsteps, tone by tone,
Or else be lost in mazes overgrown
With Discord, in a place of banishment.
Alone he went; but from his solitude
Returning, lo, there followed him a train
Of Echoes in an innumerable brood—
By Fancy from their sylvan sleep beguiled,
But ne'er from wedded Harmonies atwain,
Henceforth to slumber in their native wild.

SWINBURNE

How far soe'er thou wanderest from His law,
The gift of God we reverence in thee,
Painting thy thought in gorgeous pageantry,
To thrill the soul with ecstasy and awe—
Now with voluptuous syllables to draw
Remorseful tears; now, like the wintry sea,
All tempest-tongued, in midnight majesty,
Dread as the void primeval darkness saw.
For, since Titanic Milton smote the sky,
And echoes in the depths responsive found
Of chaos and the howling gates of hell,
No messenger of song hath soared so high,
Nor strewn with ranker luxury the ground,
Than thou, that singest of the worst so well.

MY SONG

I go; but thou, my Song,
  Shall live as long
As Tongue and fervid Heart
  Life's passion-power impart.

Henceforth, of Love and thee
  Eternal Harmony
Makes one; nor Time nor Death
  The soul-chord sundereth.

THE QUEST

O Time, where hast thou laid
  My *Self* of yesterday?
Where at his tomb I prayed
  I come again to pray—
'Tis empty! Who hath hither strayed
  And taken him away?

THE OMEN

He crept behind me, and his gentle hand
  Laid on my lids, lest I too soon should see

The face in all the world most dear to me.
The meaning then I did not understand.

But now that he is vanished, I have guessed
The import of the far foreshadowed sign:
For closer than was his the hand Divine
Is tenderly upon mine eyelids pressed.

MY BIRTH-CHAMBER

When first I wakened from the night,
Within that lonely room,
Methought in exile lived the Light
That left me in the gloom—
Its destiny henceforth to be
With memories apart from me.

BETWEEN

Beneath the dome of Yesterday,
My buried Self I see—
Of Time a portion passed away,
And nevermore to be.

Beneath tomorrow's dome, a breath
Of unawakened Morn,
I wait nativity—of Death
Or Life a babe unborn.

SONG

Nay, thou hast not my heart
Or I such cruel smart
No more could feel;
Nor with my heart couldst thou
Still heartless prove as now
Its wound to heal.

WHENCE AND WHERE?

Do the blossoms come and go
As the waters ebb and flow?
Or, as stars, the livelong year,
Are they ever blooming here
In a garden of delight,
Clear or clouded to the sight
As the Seasons o'er the land
Lift or lower a wizard wand?

ADEST

"Heaven is not far," the Violet saith,
"The fragrance of my censer-breath,
That lures to Love,
Upon the altar whence it came
Commingles with the sacred flame
That burns above."

"PEACE!"

A little warbler dead—
  A muted melody
Of dimpled-notes that spread
  Like circles on the sea:

One whispered word to chill
  The panting bosom warm,
And suddenly to still
  The passion of the storm.

ROOFLESS

O Winter-Wind, behold,
  You call no more in vain,
As in the nights of old,
  When door and window-pane
Were barred against you and the cold
  That followed in your train.

Come in; for I have known
  You now this many a year;
And dying thus alone,
  'Tis sweet again to hear
A voice familiar as my own,
  The latest in my ear.

VAPORS

In silence from the earth we rise
To learn the language of the skies;
Then, brimmed with music, melt again,
In soft soliloquies of rain,
To wake the seed-land slumbering deep
And soothe the laborer to sleep.

LEGEND

The Brook goes babbling to the Sea
  In language of the Land,
Of hill, and dale, and leafy tree,
Of song-bird, fragrant flower, and bee,
  Beyond the sloping strand.
  Alas! 'Tis all a mystery!
  She doth not understand.

APRIL

"How is it you are laughing, dear,
  With both your eyes a-twinkle?
Alas, 'tis all too soon, I fear
To let my little buds appear.
But now each restless prisoner
  Attempts my foot to tickle,
And once to laugh if I begin,
They know I cannot keep them in."

THE WHISTLER

'Tis spring; but laid
In ambuscade
The Snow malignant lingers,
And on the hill
The March wind still
At times must blow his fingers.

LIGHTS IN DARKNESS

The Moon, like Mary, bore to be
The partner of His agony.
The Sun, in pity for the race,
Like God, the Father, hid his face,
That, haled as witness, he might say,
"I saw not, for I turned away."

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

The Day—of sorrow pitiless—
Proclaims, "He is not here."
But never hath the tenderness
Of Night denied thee near.

Nay, in the twilight shadowy
Returning from afar,
She wakes again for Memory
The Dawn-extinguished star.

NIAGARA

On Regan and on Goneril—
The rugged rocks below—
He pours as from the mouth of hell
The torrent of his woe;
While o'er him, with protecting hands,
Cordelia—the rainbow—stands.

THE DEATHLESS WIND

Thou canst not die; for who can slay
A spirit like to thee?
Yet do we envy not thy stay
When all things else that be
Thy boon companions pass away
And perish utterly.

And is it, restless Wanderer,
The secret of the sigh
That in thy gentlest moods we hear
Or of the wailing cry
When tempests wild fill thee with fear—
To know thou canst not die?

IN EXCELSIS

To highest heaven the Lark alone
Of earthly messengers is known;
To Silence all things else above,
He chants the litany of Love.

OLD AND NEW

Ever old and ever new,
Else it never could be true.
Failing leaf and falling snow,
Budding germ and blossom glow,
Tell us of a dream come true—
Ever old and ever new.

THE BIOLOGIST

I seek the poles of Being; but the breath of icy death
That bans the sailor from the utmost sea
    Still baffles me.

What if the flash of naked knowledge blind
    The dazzled mind?
What if beyond it depths unfathomed be
    Of mystery—

Of limitless intelligence, that man,
Alert to scan,
Must headlong to annihilation fall,
Or grasp the All?

What then? Of what alone I'd compassed none
But mine—the One,
Omniscent, Omnipotent—could be
The Sovereignty.

A PRESENCE

As on the lids of slumber lies a dream,
Or fragrance on the petals of a flower,
Or on the bosom of the deep, a beam
At twilight's nuptial hour,
So with me, in the soul of Silence, thou
Abidest now.

A SONG OF EXPECTANCY

Time will tell us: only wait;
He alone the secret knows,
He alone the Delphic gate
Shuts or open throws.

Time will tell us: kind is he;
Sorrow wins not by delay,
But the wine of joy to be
Ripens day by day.

THE BRIDE ELECT

When God created man,
Of destiny so dim,
And deigned His work to scan,
Behold, He pitied him;
Nay, more for love of him began
A greater mystery to plan.

Within the sleeper's brain,
His waking hours to bless,
Was born—alas! in vain—
A dream of loveliness
That ne'er Omniscence had known
In light of shadeless heaven alone.

This vision of the night
The Image-Maker caught
And for his soul's delight,
A revelation wrought
Out of the dreamer's open side—
Flesh of his flesh—a virgin bride.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"

Break, silent Dawn, and flood with light
The fathomless abyss of night;

Break, thunderous Ocean, till the bound
Of utmost silence swim with sound;
Break, troubled heart! No more for thee
Shall light or sound or motion be.

A LEPER'S GRAVE

Here, where untainted flesh
Hath dread
Corruption's bride to be,
Her life-long victim finds
A bed
From her embraces free.

RUTS

I count the wrinkles in the road,
As men are wont to trace
The ravages of Time and Thought
Upon a human face.

Such are the vestiges of feet
That day by day appear,
And such of sightless memories
Whose track alone is here.

TRANSPLANTED

No seed of Joy within us lies.
So, if our souls the blossom bear,
It is a flower of Paradise
That Love has planted there.

And in its vanished light we trace
A halo of the sunset skies;
A fragrance in the holy place
Survives the sacrifice.

SURVIVAL

"Each plays his part and goes his way,"
Our hearts at seeming distance say;
But 'twixt the blossom and the fruit—
The topmost twig and lowest root,
Till seed again to seed shall fall—
There lies no languid interval;
And soul is life-allied to soul
As parts unto the perfect whole.

EYES

Sweet spirits born together
To dwell in orbs apart,
And feel the changeful weather
That clouds or clears the heart;

Ye see not one the other,
  But in the smile or tear
That makes of both a mother
  Each knows a sister near.

VALE

God speed thee, setting sun!
Thy beams for me have spun
  Of light to-day
A memory that one
Alone could bring, and none
  Can take away.

THE RIDDLE

Out of the Eater, meat:
  Thou dost the streams devour.
Out of the strong, the sweet:
  The brine begets the shower.
'Tis thus, O Samson Sea,
  I solve thy mystery.

SEPARATION

"Till Death do us part,
Ever one to remair,"
To the new-plighted heart
Was a whisper of pain:

For the soul cannot die;
And the life that is fled
Waits, bewidowed as I,
Until Death us do wed.

TO SLEEP

O tender Mother, blind and dumb,
Who dost to all thy children come
When others flee—
Like Mary at the cross to stay
E'en when our Father turns away,
Come now to me!

THE FIRST DREAMER

He woke to clasp the vision of his dream,
A self from self divided, that apart—
Twin banks begotten of the selfsame stream—
Each might in God behold the other's heart.

LOSS AND GAIN

"Behold Thy Mother! 'Tis the loss
Of heaven, the load of shame,
The sweat of agony, the cross,
That ratifies thy claim."

He heard; and for the tender name
A Babe to Bethlehem He came.

MOUNTAINEERS

They climb with eager feet,
One east, one west,
As if in haste to meet
Upon the crest;
Yet each alone—
A fate unknown—
Nor deeming one, if either fails, how far
Or near they are.

ENSHRINED

Each soul a sunbeam in a shroud
Of folding mist appears;

Now touched with rainbows, like a cloud,
And now dissolved in tears.

EXPECTANCY

An eagle on the summit—Hope and Fear,
Alternate pinions, moving restlessly.
O Distance, doth the better part appear
Doubt or fulfilment of the thing to be?

LEAR'S FOOL

"I'll go to bed at noon."
Ah, Fool, 'twas wisely said;
For Sorrow ne'er too soon
The requiem-call to bed.

FULFILMENT

Since that the unfulfilled desire of Shame
Meets the full-measured blame,
So must the prayers that missed the deed of Love
Find recompense above.

PRESENTIMENT

In boreal calm thy spirit feels
A far-off thunder roll;
And through each tropic passion steals
A current from the pole.

WILTED

Little blossom, thou and I
Both were born alike to die.
Less of time allowed to thee;
Haply, more Eternity.

SCIENCE

Like Martha, she, with question manifold,
Pursues her daily round;
Nor sees that Faith her sister, as of old,
The better part has found.

THE DOVE

The lone horizon listening seems to thee
As to a soul beloved—
Life's centre, by the zone of destiny
Forever far removed.

MY TRUANT

I bade him sleep, and he obeyed;
But when I called him back to pain
Within the slumber-world he stayed
And would not wake again.

SLEEP

A house of hands not builded like the sky,
O'erbending, but unsullied by the sod—
Where Guilt alike oblivious may lie
With Innocence beside the lamb of God.

IN BANISHMENT

Though from the waking world withdrawn,
Night's boundary to keep,
Thou floodest with a softer dawn
The hemisphere of Sleep.

"WRIT IN WATER"

E'en so; and where the fountain flows along,
Unsatisfied, the burning lips of Love
(Each passion growing with the taste thereof)
Drink, as of wine, the torrent of thy song.

LOVE'S USURY

I love you; and because you do not love,
I am the poorer and the richer, too;
The poorer, for you've taken all whereof
I gave; the richer, for enriching *you.*

ASPIRATION

Make me, O Cloud, thy comrade! Let me be
As thou, the silent Sister of the Wind;
The nursling of the Sun and of the Sea;
A shade of Earth in light celestial shrined.

BEETHOVEN (DEAF)

So, he who Samson-like of sound
Hath wrought our captive chains
In everlasting silence bound
A prisoner remains.

SHAKESPEARE'S KEY

"Unlocked his heart?" Not he!
Of *thine* the cunning key
He keeps, to open still
And enter at his will.

"THROUGH THE SHARP HAWTHORN BLOWS THE COLD WIND"

O Wind, like raging Lear forlorn,
Against the sharp opposing thorn
Thou barest thy bosom, as in scorn
Of hearts with lesser anguish torn.

SNOWDROP

The white lips just above the ground
Where sleeps my latest-born I found;
And, kneeling for the sleeper's sake,
I kissed the blossom just awake.

CONTACT

The universe is but the lordly hem
Of God's out-flowing garment; and to them
That touch in faith, its mysteries reveal
A sacrament each mortal wound to heal.

"SWEET TO THE SWEET"

What say the flowers above Ophelia's tomb?
"We bloom to fade; she faded but to bloom."

ABDUL'S CHANCES

With 'leven, it were not surprising
Should Abdul get another rising,
Or with the bakers over there
Or brewers, he should get a bier.

IN THE CONFESSIONAL

"Well, Pat, have you no more to say?"
"That's all, yer Riverence, today;
But with the help of Hiven, be sure
Anither toime I'll tell ye more."

EUREKA

I love, as when a boy,
That note exultant of domestic joy,
When, triumph won,
The Hen, like Archimedes, proclaims,
"I've found it! If ye doubt me,
Dons and Dames,
Come *see* what I have done."

AN INCONGRUITY

As they have safely reached the Church,
It seems a thing to smile at

That, to direct them in the search,
We had a Pounch-as Pilot.

INCOME FROM GO-OUT

A fellow with a gouty foot
Was on a restless donkey put,
At which he swore in vain;
But soon he hired the donkey out,
And what he got relieved the gout,
For it ass-waged his pain.

"CROSSING THE BAR"

No need, O weary traveller,
To seek the ocean far;
For here, whene'er the coast is clear,
The schooners cross the bar.

THE TIDES AT PANAMA

"As effort gigantic,"
Exclaims the Atlantic,
"Is making, to wed us by force."
"Indeed, 'tis terrific,"
Replies the Pacific,
"But cannot we get a divorce?

For Teddy
Is ready
To sanction an ocean
Whose aim
Is a claim
To prevent Trust-promotion."

MY TROUBLE

Alas! what shall I do?
I have lost my nearest friend;
He tender was and true
And faithful to the end.

In sunshine and in shade
He closer stuck to me
Than handle to a blade,
Or wax unto a bee.

But he'll not come again,
Nor know what I'm about,
For when he gave me pain,
The doctor cut him out.

And sad it is to me
That I can never tell
If my appendix be
In heaven or in hell.

A FINE PENALTY

He offered but a poor defence,
That advocate of mine;
And yet, despite the evidence,
The penalty was fine.

OLD-MADE

The greater mystery it is
The more we think upon it,
That 'tis the oldest style of Miss
That wants the youngest bonnet.

Nor is it levity of mind
That leads to such selection,
For 'tis the fruit we often find
Of much *mature reflection.*

MAID OF ALGERIA

There was an old maid of Algeria
Whose lungs were but cells of bacteria;
So she cut them both out,
Exclaiming, no doubt,
"It will be said that I died of Hysteria."

THE FRISKING LAMB

Though gay its life, in fact and fable,
In death its fate is lamb-on-table.

A BRIEF PEDIGREE

My mother was a Mare;
  My father was, alas,
(It pains me to declare),
  A veritable Ass.
With rare exceptions, as a rule,
There're no descendants from a Mule—
The simple reason why, no doubt,
Some other families die out.

A PIECE OF PRESUMPTION

Asked a possum of a canner
In his most seductive manner,
"Can you take me in, old man?"
He replied, "Possum, I can."

SEA-SICKNESS

Her doctor advising, a victim of grippe
  Set out on a journey to Rome;
But ere she reached Naples, she threw up her trip
  And returned by the next steamer home.

D——D

D. D. O. sioux, appeal to you?
And D. D. favor win?
In D. D. D. appeal; and we
Politely took him in.

SONG OF THE SIOUX

O'Gorman comes! Your knives unsheathe
To slice so sweet an appetiser!
Kindle the fire! and whet your teeth!
And be each a man a Gormandiser!

DEFIANCE

Though the modern woman *pants*
To disguise her gender,
Yet no fear my spirits haunts
Lest I should offend her.

Vain it were indeed to hiss—
Vainer still to chide her;
The *hit* offends her, and the *Miss*
Makes the breeches wider.

JOB-PRINTING

"Job-Printing!" I suspected so,
For none was ever half so slow
But Job, who by the gift he had
Of patience drove the devil mad.

THE CONNOR MANUSCRIPT

MORNING-GLORIES

We blossom in the border land
  When pilgrim shadows strew
The largess of a liberal hand
  In glittering gems of dew.

Too timorous our glances are
  The noonday watch to keep:
The sisters of the twilight star,
  With him we wake or sleep.

EGLANTINE

Sweet Eglantine, this breath of thine—
Mute eloquence of what was mine—
Awakes a memory divine,
  A vanished gleam

Of Joy, that in my heart today,
Amid the folding shadows gray,
Doth lie, as erst in light it lay,
A fragrant dream.

ATTAR OF ROSES

The wafture of a thousand flowers is here
Concentrated from afar,
As gleams of many a steadfast sister sphere
Upon a wandering star.

And every breath in sweet remembrance bears
The blossom whence it came,
As radiance, or genial warmth, declares
The unextinguished flame.

THE CHRIST-LIKE SPRING

Wherever thou dost come,
The birds and fountains dumb
Break forth in song;
While groping blossoms blind
Their sight and fragrance find
To hail the throng,
Exulting everywhere,
Of palsied limbs and bare,
Reclothed and strong.

THE WRECK

Was it thy lord the sea
That wrought this tragedy,
A spouse to spurn?
Or didst thou faithless prove
And to thine ancient love,
The land, return!

The lesson of thy fate
(Alas, for thee too late)
In silence saith,
"Once wedded to the main
Unto the shore again
To turn is Death."

SUCCESSORS

Says the Shadow to the Sun,
"When the victory is done
All the world that thou hast won
Will be mine!"

Says the Sun, "My banner bright
May be folded for a night;
But anon with broader light
Shall it shine."

FAREWELL!

"Farewell!" The fading day
Still whispers, "Fare thee well.
I go the darkened way
Whence none returns to tell
Of those that thither stray
What fate befell."

THE WRAITH

The mist commingled with her tears
The while she watched his form—
The hazard of her hopes and fears—
Defy the threatening storm.

And where he vanished from her eyes,
Behold, his spirit brave,
Defiant, in the fog's disguise,
Forsakes the watery grave.

WHERE ARMIES MET

I heard the distant summons loud
To battle, from the crested Cloud,
The vaunting trumpet of the Gale,
The rattling musketry of Hail,
The sobbing of the Rain, and lo!
The silence of the shrouding Snow.

THE TREE

Thou art the blessed Tree
Whose fruit proclaimeth thee,
O Mother mine!
For never laden bough
Such burden bore as thou,
O Love Divine.

DOMUS AUREA

Behold the living "House of Prayer"
Above the waves uplifted; where
The Bird of heaven, no more to roam,
Henceforth forever hath His home
Within the maiden heart that heard
And mothered God's Eternal Word.

THE SWORD OF SIMEON

Blest be the sword that cleft her heart in twain!
Else had the "pondered word" forever lain
Within the temple of her soul concealed,
Whose wound the thoughts of many a heart revealed:
Yea, to the source from whence the waters flow
The spear that smites the fountain-Rock must go.

"OMNIPOTENCE IN BONDS"

Thou that couldst ne'er be bound
  Canst nevermore be free:
So close about Thee wound
  Is our humanity.
As well desert Thy Father's throne
As Mary's Motherhood disown.

THE MATERNITY

One through Mother Mary, we
With Thy warm humanity;
And through Thee, her only Son,
With our heavenly Father one;
Motherless the world above,
Earth had closer claims of love.

CHRIST THE MENDICANT

A stranger, to his own
He came; and one alone,
  Who knew not sin,

His lowliness believed,
And in her soul conceived
To let Him in.

He naked was, and she
Of her humanity
A garment wove:
He hungered, and she gave
What most His heart did crave—
A mother's love.

A MEDITATION

'Tis Nothingness that sunders me,
O God, from thine Eternity,
Wherein, a being yet to be,
I dwelt forever one with Thee,
Till twixt Thee and thy living Thought
This veil of Nothingness was wrought—
A gulf thy Love alone could span—
The mystery that made me Man.

SELF-SACRIFICE

Lo, all I have is Thine—
My wealth, my poverty.
Ne'er canst thou, Lord, resign

Of Self so much to me:
For, giving Thou hast more;
But I, henceforth, am poor.

ON THE HEIGHTS

On Pisgah each must stand,
And in a fruitful land
Afar descried,
Behold with longing eyes
Some promised Paradise
Of bliss denied.

And each on Calvary
Upon his cross must be
A sacrifice;
Where, Christ-like, two between—
For Life or Death unseen—
The victim dies.

WORSHIPPERS

The gift of utterance is ours,
Love's service to proclaim;
But in the fragrance of the flowers
There breathes a purer flame.
Abiding in their place of birth,

They cleave unto the sod,
In reverence, nearer unto earth;
In lowliness, to God.

THE PHANTOM WRAITH

When roars the wind and beats the rain,
A face before my window-pane—
A phantom of the storm—I see,
My own benighted effigy.

So, when the spirit shuddereth
Before the mystery of Death,
Perchance the shadow there portrayed
Is but its own reflected shade.

THE WAY-SIDE TREE

The loiterers in my shade of old
Themselves are shadows now;
Their bodies, mingled with the mold,
Upbreathe to many a bough
The leaves o'ershadowing today
Some fellow-pilgrim on the way
That leads him to the vision blest,
The Holy Sepulchre of Rest.

(THE MESSAGE OF THE GRASS)

Give me Thyself to see
In what is least to me:
  That as I pass
  Each blade of grass
  That points above
May cry aloud, "O Love,
The light is Thine alone,
The shadows all my own."

MATER DEI

As Faith, a pilgrim, seeks the tomb
Where once in Death's eclipsing gloom
  Her Hope o'erclouded lay;
So Love unto the blessed womb
Where slept her Life's unbudded bloom
  Would lowly reverence pay.

BEYOND

How many larks are soaring—
  How many voices loud—
Their songs of praise outpouring
  Where distance, like a cloud,

Is stretched above us for a screen
Lest aught of heaven be heard or seen!

Ah, should one note prevailing,
A momentary glow,
Love's meteor light out-trailing,
Flash over us below,
Thenceforth the music of a sigh
Were earth's divinest melody.

UNDER THE TREES

("Exultabunt omnia ligna silvarum.")

As oft in wandering distress,
Today in solemn thankfulness,
Unto your God and mine
I come with winnowings of prayer,
O sinless suppliants, to share
Your mysteries divine.

THE GLEANER

Lo, silence, like a roving bee
Upon her daily round,
To fill the hive of memory
Despoils each blossom-sound,

And winters, as the past devours
Whate'er the present yields,
The promise of immortal flowers
For time's unfallowed fields.

LIFE-SONG

Breathe it must for ecstasy,
Or a stifled blossom die:
Aching silence overgrown
Brings to birth the living tone
Sap-like, evermore to be
One with full-blown memory.

NUNC ET SEMPER

Am I awake? or do I dream?
To me forever moving seem
Alike the margin and the stream.

I breathe; and lo, a whisper saith,
"'Tis Life." A silence answereth,
As if in pity, "Nay, 'tis Death."

Alike the Future and the Past
Proclaim, "We are but shadows cast
Before and after, first and last.

Between us thine eternal lot
Is laid—a consecrated spot—
Whereon we gaze, but enter not.

Unpiloted—we know not how—
Unto this new-discovered Now,
We come, its guardians, as thou."

DEFLOWERED

All the light of heaven
  In a single beam
Unto earth was given,
  As a perfect dream,
Wherein one bated breath
Of ecstasy is Death.

All of faith's believing
  In one smile of love;
All of life's receiving
  In a frown thereof:
For one frail flower the less,
God's world a wilderness.

A TRYSTING PLACE

As stars amid the darkness seen,
When flows the deepening dawn between

To cover them from sight,
O'erleap the spaces of the dark
And, spark to quickening sister-spark,
Commingle in the light;

E'en so, a solitary way
Do we, beloved, day by day
In weariness and pain,
Climb desolate from steep to steep,
Till in the shadowy vale of sleep
Our spirits blend again.

MATURITY

Talk not of childhood's thoughtless joy!
I would not be again a boy
For all that boyhood brings;
The callow fledgling in the nest
Is not of birds supremely blest
As he that soars and sings.

AN ECHO

"Keats! Keats!"
From yonder bush
The startled thrush
This name repeats;

As if he heard
My *thought*, and fain
Would greet again
His brother-bird.

TENNYSON

'Twas fit that with the falling year
He too should fall;
That he, when Nature heeds, should hear
The homeward call;
That leaves autumnal o'er his bier
Bespread the pall,
For in their funeral train appear
The thoughts of all.

AFTER BEDTIME

Little heads are sleeping all,
While within the darkened hall
Hang their hats upon the wall;

Like the little hives arow,
Where bee-fancies to and fro
All day long do come and go.

Some with pleasure, some with pain,
Through the sunshine and the rain,
Busy for the brooding brain.

All is quiet now and rest;
In each slumber-shaded breast
Dreams have found another nest.

BLIND

Is then the light so near
  That seems so far to me?
E'en so about us here
  All vanished joys may be.

Time's chrysalis outgrown,
  The garments that they wore—
Sight, smell, touch, taste, and tone—
  They heed them now no more;

For deep to answering deep
  Calls through eternity,
E'en as these tears I weep,
  Alas, but cannot see!

TOO LATE

Sighed a poet when his fame
  After fifty winters came
And the Editors were asking for his rhyme:
  Alas, I've lost my chance
  As a hero of romance,
For I've lived just thirty years beyond the time!

THE MORNING STAR

The latest beacon spark
Upon the western way
To guide through shallowing dark
The silver sails of Day.

THE PASSION

O Night, thou never canst forget
The agony and the bloody sweat
Whereof the mere remembrance yet
Again makes all thy garments wet.

SACRIFICE

The dusky mother of the rosy morn
Dies at its birth, contented to depart;
As sorrow from the precincts of the heart
When, flushed with tears, the man-child joy is born.

COBWEB

A fairy canopy it seems,
By magic fingers spread;
Whence, suddenly, our vanished dreams
At flush of morning fled.

TO A DEAD THRUSH

Though Silence shuts the gate of Song,
I keep thereof the key,
And hear thee warbling still among
The groves of Memory.

SHADOWS

Like stars that in the waves below
With heaven's reflected splendor glow,
The flowers in all their glory bright
Are shadows of a finer light.

LINES

As the petals fall away
Briefer grows the autumn day;
When the blossoms come again,
Longer will the light remain.

SNOWDROPS

As a blossom of the light
Drifted downward through the night,
From the darkness far below
Came her counterpart of snow.

GARNERED

The tints that fly the autumn leaves,
The leaves that fly the tree,
Anon the Wizard Winter weaves
In blossoms yet to be.

THE ACORN

Of myriads but one hath found
The sesame that opes the ground,
And shows the hidden treasury
Of all the wealth that makes a tree.

THE TREE

To me the trembling Adam fled in shame
From God's avenging eye;
To me the Christ, a sinless victim, came
For Adam's guilt to die.

THE ORIGIN OF TEARS

When Eve, the twilight heavens to view,
Her eyes, like twin-born violets blue,
Upraised—the angel of the Dew
Bestowed his blessing ere he knew.

SOLICITUDE

No mother minds so tenderly
Her babe, to mirror back its smiles,
As moves the never-resting sea
About a slumbering isle.

TO THE NEW MOON

Thou lookest on the lonely place,
To find no more the sleeping face,
Nor kiss again the crescent brow—
Thy fairer counterpart till now.

APRIL

For many a flower that sleeps
The Zephyrs sigh in vain,
Till April, Christ-like, weeps
And Lazarus lives again.

THE WIZARD

Spring-like Prospero through all the land
Now waves again his magic wand,
From Winter's long captivity
To set the April-blossoms free.

AN EASTER LILY

In vain to seal the sepulchre
The Pilate Death commands;
For, lo, again his prisoner
Within the garden stands.

WHEAT

Christlike falls the golden grain;
Christlike doth it rise again;
Christlike, as our daily food,
One with us in flesh and blood.

SEPARATION

To leave what most we love, in loneliness,
To know our absence in some heart will make
E'en love itself a sorrow for our sake—
Ah, whose the weight of heavier distress?

SIGNIFICANCE

Nothing is vain: a stifled sigh
Life's passion pang betrays:
One glance of Love's prophetic eye
Eternity surveys.

RESTORATION

The light may cleave our kindred shades
And banish us apart,
But distance in the darkness fades
And we are heart to heart.

DESMOS

I am Thy captive; break Thou not my chain;
Beyond my dungeon all is death to me.
Here must my soul, Love's prisoner, remain;
Bondage alone is life and liberty.

DELUSION

Thy presence woke me to the pain
Of sympathies apart:
Thy absence bids me dream again
That we are one in heart.

THE HOUR

"Why weepest thou, O twilight gray,
In unavailing sorrow?"
"Alas, I've lost a yesterday
And ne'er shall find a morrow.

THE RIVER

How calm the silent sister of the sea!
No ripple on her ever-moving breast;
The glass of Time and of Eternity—
Unending motion in unending rest.

DIVORCE

Time was when Faith and Reason trod
With wedded hands the ways of God,
But now, Love's sacrament denied,
What God hath joined doth Man divine.

TO A BROTHER-BONE

Apart, of death and silence we,
The fittest emblems found,
Together, mad with minstrelsy,
Leap into life and sound.

TOMORROW

Upon thy face alone no trace
Of Time, no touch of sorrow;
No shade of night upon the light
That floods thy soul, sweet Morrow.

BONDAGE

Cries Death, "O Man, thy liberty,
What boots it! Low thou bowest the knee
Subservient to masters three—
Thy conquerors—Pain, Age, and Me.

DREAMS

Our dreams but tell the thoughts of those
Around us; e'en as water shows
The images upon it thrown
In lights and shadows not its own.

VESTIGES

Upon the Isle of Time we trace
The signs of many a vanished race;
But on the sea that caps it round,
No memory of man is found.

ANGELS OF PAIN

Ah, could they come revisiting the spot,
Whence by our prayers we drove them utterly,
Shame were it for their saddened eyes to see
How soon their visitations are forgot!

AN ALIEN

I saw in heaven, the hovering wings beneath,
A Shade unbanished by the Light above:
What is thy name? "The messenger of Love—
The friend of all who passed yon portal—Death."

TWO EPITAPHS

"Love lingers here while life has fled."
Where, Death, thy victory?
"Life lingers here where Love is dead."
Then hail, O Death, to thee!

TIME'S MEZZOTINT

'Tis in the shadows that we trace
The light of Love's remembered face:
'Tis in the register of Pain
That Life's immortal deeds remain.

THE LARK'S FIAT

How vast the ocean of the dark!
How small the compass of the lark
Whose "Fiat" from the void of night
Awakes the new-created light.

SLEEP

Another Mary seemest thou to me—
A rainbow span,
'Twixt life and death a miracle, as she
'Twixt God and Man.

EXTORTION

Amid the stores of Opulence
If *Courtesy* is scant,
'Twere cruel to exact from thence
What would increase the want.

LONELINESS

Dead in the desert! with the great white moon
Above him and around him wastes of sand,
The seed of endless centuries, so soon
Escaped the struggles of a nerveless hand.

TRANSMISSION

'Tis one by one we come and go;
'Tis one by one we stand or fall;
'Tis one by one the All we know,
And one by one He comes to all.

HARVEST

The powers of heaven plant the weed
That man uproots to set his seed:
So doth the God Incarnate plan
Through Man to feed his fellow-man.

MY STEWARDSHIP

Lord, what Thou lendest me is Thine;
  Nor less beneath Thy care,
For that Thy bounty makes it mine
  Love's heritage to share.

TO A SON IN CHRIST

Ye Angels, lo, an angel unto you,
  His Guardians, I commend.
Behold him, white in baptismal dew,
  Nor blush to call him friend.

SECOND CHILDHOOD

Since such alone can of Thy kingdom be,
A little child Thou comest unto me;
Then whatsoe'er of second birth the pain,
Make me, O Lord, a little child again.

MY SERVANT

If what unto the least I do,
I do it unto thee,
Then in the least, O Lord, I view
Thy service unto *me*.

BLESSED VIRGIN

(Why is the B. V. clad in Blue?)

Because when comes no cloud between
My heart and Heaven above
Then wears the firmament serene
The livery of Love.

'LEAR'S FOOL

A bird that twitters where storm-treachery
Hath fanged the oak, whose nest-supporting limb,
Death-smitten, droops compassionate for him
As for its own unsceptered majesty.

ALFRED TENNYSON

The voice that late with music thrilled
The world, in silence now is stilled.
Or is our loss the larger gain
Of worlds new-wakened to his strain?

UNFETTERED

The winds are wailing, and I cannot sleep;
What would ye, wandering sisters? Free to go
Where'er ye list, and yet no happier so
Than in the limits of Life's dungeon-keep?

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

I saw thee once in waking light—
A darkness now to me,
Since 'tis alone in dreams of night
That I may gaze on thee.

MOLOKAI

The heaven's clean space above it and around
The one expanse whereon no stain can be;
Soothing all else within an Eden bound
Of tropic life but snow-clad leprosy.

A MIRACLE

For each *hen*-turkey slain today
To celebrate Thanksgiving,
Full many a gobbler, strange to say,
Is made among the living.

RESTITUTION

"Did you restore that mangy sow
You stole from Pat McCarthy?"
"Indade I did, and have her now;
And she is fat and hearty."

POST MORTEM

"When I am dead," the poet said,
"The world shall read my verses."
"Then better pray on earth to stay,"
Said one, "and curb the curses."

SUI GENERIS

He: "I'm not of Adam's lineage bred,
And pedigree will show it."
She: "Ah, pity 'tis the old man's dead.
'Twould please him so to know it."

THE EPITAPH

Not dead, but sleeping. So it read.
Said Pat, when he was shown it,
"I would, bedad, if I was dead,
Be man enough to own it."

ODE TO A PASSION

He slandered me; and I "with eyes of fire,"
Like Collins' Anger, rose and struck the liar.
"You do me wrong," he muttered with surprise.
"Then," said I, "thus do I Apollo-gize."

THE DONAHOE CLASS-BOOK

CHRIST'S LITTLE SISTER

Little Sister of the Poor,
Asking alms from door to door,
  Ever on you go;
Clothed in the garb of meekness,
Finding strength in others' weakness,
  Soothing others' woe.

Little Sister of the Poor,
Rich in patience to endure
  Stern Redemption's load;
Cold and rain and parching heat
Hinder not heroic feet
  On the Royal Road.

Little Sister of the Poor,
When your weary day is o'er

Rest there may not be;
For the aged, sick, and needy
Vigils claim and succor speedy,
Turning unto thee.

Little Sister of the Poor,
Narrow is the way but sure,
Heavenward leading on;
For the Master's word thou knowest,
"What unto the least thou doest
Unto me is done."

Rhetoric Class '74–'75.

THE BELLMAN

He sits alone in the belfry,
A feeble man and gray,
And tolls the bell when its full notes tell
Of the hours that glide away.

In the mist of the early morning,
In the glare of the garish noon,
In the midnight deep when the shadows creep
On the track of the waning moon,

When the snow in the starlight glistens,
When the flowers from their grave arise,

When the faint airs swoon in the languid June,
When the dirge of autumn sighs.

Like Time with the scythe uplifted
He measures each silent spell,
Sifting the sand with a tremulous hand,
As he waits for the brooding knell.

Each stroke has a double meaning
A welcome and farewell—
In a single breath a birth and death,
A past and a future dwell.

A groan and a peal of laughter,
A tear of joy or of pain,
A frown that breaks or a smile that wakes
Sunshine in the heart again.

Like a vane in the wind of Fortune
Has the life of the bellman gone,
For its changes have been as the shadow and sheen
That stride over the waving corn.

But his heart like the bell he tolleth
Beats ever the selfsame tone,
Saying all I have is the God's who gave;
Let Him do as He will with His own.

Rhetoric Class, '74–'75.

THE OUTCAST

Dead! Found in the desolate street
  Where the drifting snow had silently piled
  As if in pity, poor wandering child,
To mantle thee in its sheet.

Pale e'en as thy covering pure
  Nor colder its touch than thy marble breast
  And the heart beneath in a dreamless rest
That throbs to the tempest no more.

Still fresh in the halo of morn!
  But love-blighted Innocence thrust away
  Prone on the gulf of its bitterness lay
Aghast, unresisting, forlorn.

Alas! For thee, dissolute man,
  Thy token her tapering finger bears;
  How the glittering mock of the bauble glares
'Mid beauty so rigid and wan.

Couldst thou gaze on thy victim again
  On the icy calm of her lineaments now,
  This pallid eclipse of the queenly brow
Would smite thy voluptuous brain—

Yet naught but forgiveness there.
  The dumb lips falter in suppliance meek,

While a ringlet stirs on the ivory cheek
As if with the breathing of prayer.

Ah! Who hath her history known?
The bleak world stifles the penitent's prayer;
She turns from its withering scorn to die
Homeless, unfriended, alone.

O thou, in whose sheltering side
Sweet refuge still for the lost remains,
Cleanse in thy pity her glittering stains,
Her shame in thy chastity hide.

A VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ON THE EVE OF THE EPIPHANY

Now the dusky wing of twilight
Hovers o'er the weary day,
And the ever deeping shadows
Slowly steal across our way.

Here amid the solemn stillness
And the gathering shades of night
Sweet it is, O loving Jesu,
Thee to seek, our fadeless Light!

Yonder lamp before the altar
Tells us of Thy presence there,

As the wondrous Star of Bethlehem
Did Thy dwelling place declare.

And we bow in adoration
As the Magi knelt of old,
Offering Thee our humble tributes
With their incense, myrrh, and gold.

Grant us like those Kings of the Orient,
Ever onward to proceed,
Through all dangers, pain, and labor,
Wheresoe'er Thy Light may lead;

Till our earthly journey ended,
We at last may rest with them,
Where no shadow veils Thy glory,
In the heavenly Bethlehem.

ADIEU

The leaves upon the summer tree
Hang side by side,
But winter's breath will scatter them
All far and wide.
E'en thus, together have our lots been cast,
And so for us the parting comes at last.
But He who clothes the summer tree
Or makes it bare,
Lets not the frailest blossom fall
Without His care.

So, ever 'neath His guiding hand, may we
Together or apart, safe, sheltered be.

THE CONNOLLY MANUSCRIPT

WIND-RIDING

Sit sideways on the wind, my dear,
As on a lady's saddle.
'Tis not allowed
A maiden Cloud
Above the world to straddle.

And keep a bright lookout ahead;
For to the careless ranger
Across the sky,
The rainbows high
Present a striking danger.

And should you meet another Cloud
Be on your guard, my daughter,
Or ere you know
Headlong you'll go
And dash yourself to water.

THE CHILD AND THE OCEAN

THE CHILD

"Now, Ocean dear, all yesterday
I could not come with you to play;

For wind and wave, like angry boys,
Were making such tremendous noise
That I was quite ashamed to see
How rough and ugly you could be.
Come now! But keep your temper, pray,
Or I shall have to go away."

THE OCEAN

"Yes, little playmate, I was bad;
And while it was a fault,
A very good excuse I had,
For just a little salt
Got in a Breeze's eye, and he
And all the Winds were fighting me.
But, if you near me here remain,
I'll never frighten you again."

THREE JUDGES

Judge Knife is very narrow;
Judge Fork goes deeper in,
  Down to the very marrow,
And sticks through thick and thin.
Judge Spoon—the brightest of the three—
Is wide enough all sides to see.

THE SNOWDROP

"A Nun of Winter's sisterhood,"
A snowdrop in the garden stood
Alone amid the solitude
That round her lay.

No sister blossom there was seen;
No memory of what had been;
No promise of returning green,
Or scented spray:

But she alone was bold to bear
The banner of the spring, and dare,
In winter's stern despite, declare
A gentler sway.

So didst thou, Damien, when the glow
Of faith and hope was waning low,
For souls bewintered love the snow
And lead the way.

MIGNONETTE

Give me the earth, and I might heap
A mountain from the plain;
Give me the waters of the deep,

I might their strength restrain;
But here a secret of the sod
Betrays the daintier hand of God.

AT LAST

How full of phantoms are the days
That shorten as they go!
Along the once frequented ways,
Alas, are none I know!
Lone relic of reality,
I too a phantom would be.

ON THE FORTHCOMING VOLUME OF SYDNEY LANIER'S POEMS

Snow! Snow! Snow!
Do thy worst, Winter, but know, but know
That, when the Spring cometh, a blossom shall blow
From the heart of the Poet that sleeps below,
And his name to the ends of the earth shall go,
In spite of the snow!

MY SOUL

In my body bides a guest,
Time-born for eternity—
Ne'er to mortal manifest;

To my very self unknown;
Visible to God alone,
And revealing Him to me.

MEMORY

Lo, the blossom to the Bee
Yields not more than thou to me—
Food for love to live upon
When the summer days are gone,
Poorer than they come, to find
What was sweetest, left behind.

LAUGHTER

"Et ridebit in die novissimo"

When wrought of joy and innocence,
'Tis unto God it goes,
A fragrance of the olive whence
His "oil of gladness" flows.

THE END

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ERRATA

Two Easter Lilies, page 265, should be on page 105.
Christ the Mendicant, page 211, should not be repeated on page 443.
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